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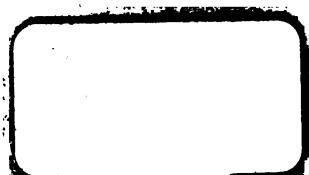
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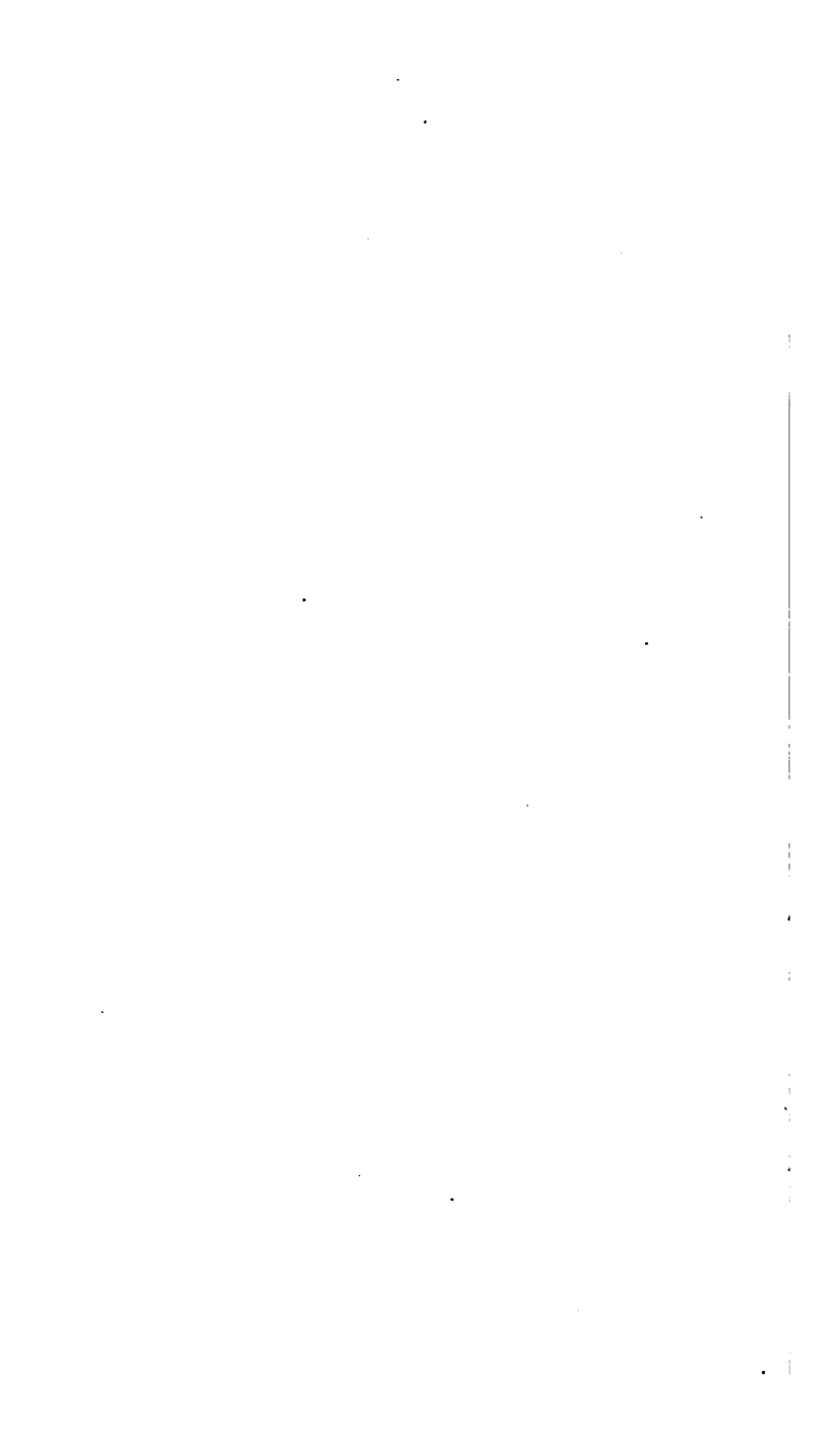
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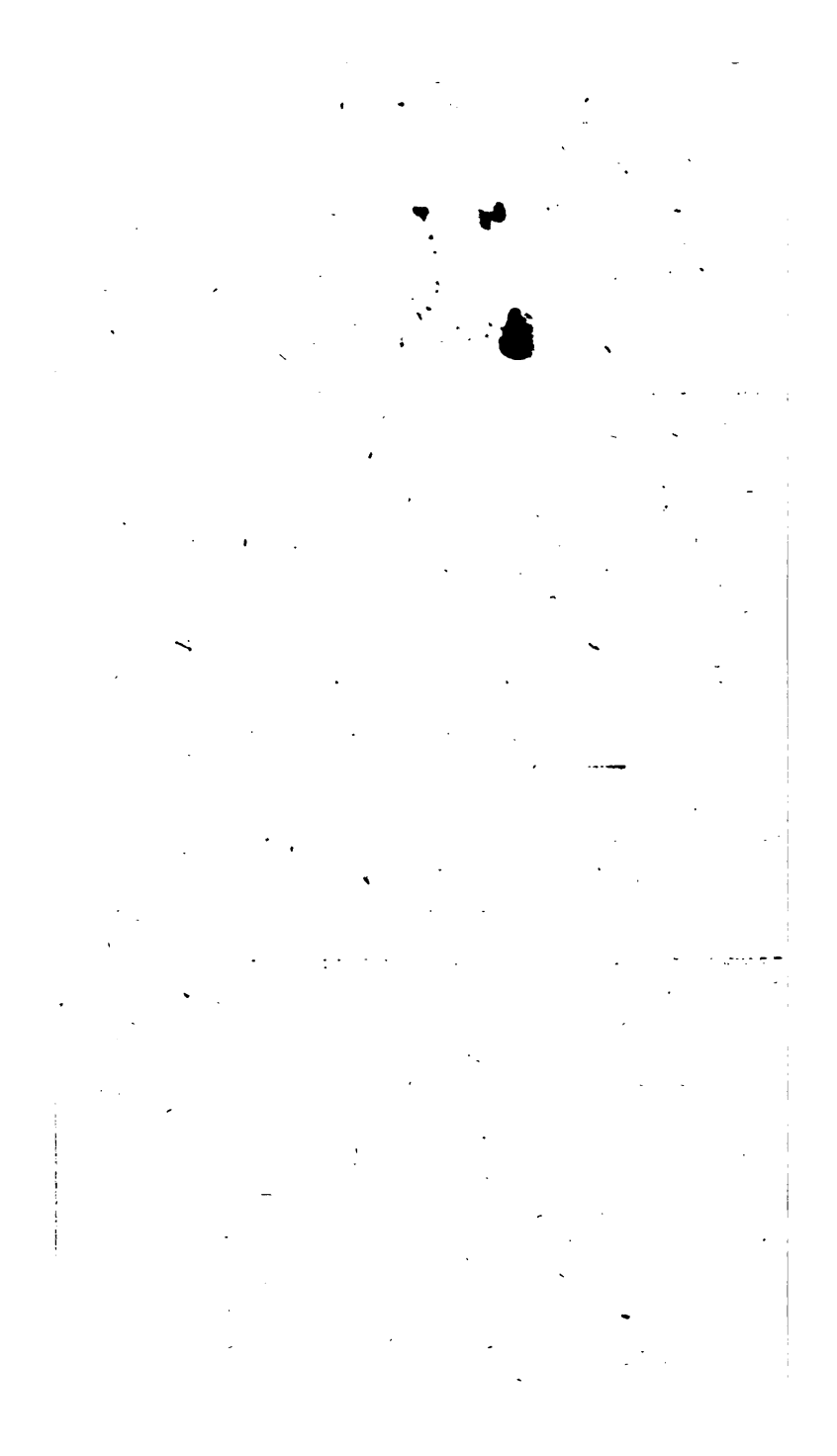
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MEN AND MANNERS,

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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MEN AND MANNERS,

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES:

BY FRANCIS LATHOM,
AUTHOR OF THE
MIDNIGHT BELL, CASTLE OF OLLADA, &c.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. III.

*"I sit down to write what I think, not to think what I
shall write."* CERVANTES.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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1904

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CHAP. I.

*A rare Example of the Advice of an old Man
being followed by a young one.*

JONATHAN PARKINSON was too accurate in the execution of his plans to be at the common-gate a minute later than the time he had purposed being there. The morning was frosty ; he wore a great coat, and a silk handkerchief tied round his neck, to defend him from the cold ; and walked up and down a short gravel path, near the entrance to the common, waiting the arrival of the persons unknown.

The footway leading from the village to the common lay behind a hedge which bordered on the path in which Parkinson was walking, and a stile at the end of it fronted

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The footway leading from the village to the common lay behind a hedge which bordered on the path in which Parkinson was walking, and a stile at the end of it fronted

the gate where the appointment had been made. In about a quarter of an hour, the sound of steps near the stile drew Parkinson's eye to the spot, and he perceived Jacob Lamb climbing over it, to follow Alfred Eringham, who was already in the lane. As he had no suspicion of his being a party concerned, he immediately turned up the path, hoping thus to avoid them, and he spared an explanation of what had called him to that spot. When arrived at the end of the lane, he again turned and fronted the common-gate: he saw Jacob leaning upon it, and Alfred standing at a short distance, both with their backs towards him. Irresolute whether to remain where he then was, in the hope of their leaving the gate, or to continue his walk as if chance had led him to it, he stopped a few moments in thought, during which he perceived Jacob Lamb to turn round and observe him, and Alfred immediately after to start as from a reverie, and also turn his face towards him. A suspicion of no very pleasant nature, nor very far removed from the truth, burst upon

Parkinson,

Parkinson, and he moved forward to the gate.

"Good-morrow to thee, Alfred!" he said.

Alfred returned his wish, and Jacob bowed in silence.

"Thou art early abroad," said Parkinson.

"Yes," Alfred replied.

"I fear this unusual hour bespeaketh unusual business," resumed Parkinson.

"You know my errand hither, then," said Alfred.

"If thou confessest that thou hast one here, I do know it," returned Parkinson with emphasis.

Alfred turned aside his head in silence.

"Dost thou feel the sin of thy conduct, and yet dost persist therein?"

"Can I hear a character which I esteem aspersed, and not demand satisfaction for the insult offered it?"

"How can the vice thou art about to commit be a satisfaction to the person insulted, or a punishment to the insulter, when thou givest the life of thyself, whom thou doubtless thinkest in the right, to an equal chance of death with the life of him, whom thou doubtless thinkest in the wrong?"

"But the opinion of the world," said Alfred, "would condemn me for not acting as I have done."

"Shall we suffer the laws of man," cried Parkinson, "to supersede the prohibitions of God?—shall we atheistically renounce the divine authority, by trampling on one of its strictest commands?"

"But my adversary may not fall," said Alfred,

"Are not commission of murder, and the attempt, one, in the feelings of the heart?"

Alfred felt the truth of Parkinson's remark.

"Who hath injured thee?" continued Parkinson; "what so gross offence hath been committed against thee, to render thee forgetful that the first Christian principle is the forgiveness of injuries?"

"It was not myself whom he insulted," answered Alfred confusedly; "I could have borne much more against myself, but——"

"It was Miss Rachel," interrupted Jacob, "that Sir Flat spoke ill of, and his noble heart took fire in her defence."

Parkinson heaved, made an effort to swallow

swallow his spittle, then said in a low voice,
 "Why, Alfred, didst thou feel so strong an
 interest in what did relate to her?"

"Because," he replied, "standing single
 as she does in the world, she has no one to
 call upon in her defence."

Parkinson wiped his eyes with the corner
 of the handkerchief which hung from his
 neck, and said earnestly, "I am her pro-
 tector;—I do thank thee for thy concern
 about her, but I must take this quarrel upon
 myself."

"Pardon me," said Alfred, "that cannot
 be now; my own reputation is at stake; I
 have challenged this man, and shall be stig-
 matized for a coward by the world, if I do
 not fight him."

"Is not this rule of manners, this opinion,
 formed merely on fashion, perhaps first ori-
 ginating in the caprice of some headstrong
 boy, too glaringly unreasonable to com-
 mand compliance with it from a man of
 sense and virtue?"

"But to be scorned by the world!"—
 returned Alfred.

“Is better than to be condemned by thine own conscience,” replied Parkinson: “he who conformeth to the absurd opinions of the world, will not find it ready to give him any consolation, in return for the injury compliance with them may have done to his private feelings;—sneers will be the only notice bestowed on him, if he ventures to hint the loss of his peace of mind; and unhappiness must be his lot:—but he who hath wisdom to abjure compliance with its forms, when he knoweth them opposite to religion, will have a consoler, within his own breast, to defy outward malice.”

Alfred was silent.

“And if the world do call thee coward,” Parkinson went on, “tell it, that it is cowardice that doth dare to die, courage that doth brave life:—the sword and pistol are no arguments; he who doth fall may be the innocent, and he who triumpheth, the guilty one: and often I do believe of those who do meet in the field, neither is really offended, but fearing to be considered too passive under the shadow of an insult, the one sendeth a challenge,

lenge, which the receiver, from deference to the opinion of honour in the world, accepteth; both acting from what they do conceive to be necessity, and each without malevolence against the other.—Is the obligation of duty to be thus set aside by the caprice of fashion? Shame! shame!”

“But when we live in the world, are we not, in some measure, to conform to its opinions?” asked Alfred.

“No, not to its vicious ones; I tell thee, no!” replied Parkinson with energy.

“But sense of imagined shame is such a torture!” exclaimed Alfred.

“And lost tranquillity of mind, a rack,” returned Parkinson.

“I am either way in a strait.”

“Because thou payest higher regard to false honour than to religion.”

“Why are we placed, by nature, in such perplexing situations?”

“As probations of our fortitude.”

“I thought I had shown mine.”

“How so?”

“By challenging Sir Flat.”

"Thy rashness, rather."

"Oh, Parkinson! who could tamely hear Rachel's fame aspersed?"

"He who knoweth her innocent."

"Can you think *I—I* doubt it?"

"If I did think it, I should look upon thee with that contempt which would best prove thee in error to the world;---vehemence, in all cases, seemeth to carry with it doubt."

"Heaven knows how I adore her purity, how I reverence you for protecting her, and how it stung my very soul to hear her and you accused together."

"We are none of us without our faults; perhaps I might be justly blamed."

"Impossible! impossible! had you heard the very indignant language he used—" Alfred paused.

"For what he said of me, beyond the truth; my own heart would have given me satisfaction."

"That you and she," continued Alfred, "were very intimately connected."

"Related?" asked Parkinson eagerly.

"Oh, no, improperly connected."

Parkinson's

Parkinson's eyes fell, and his composure returned: "That wanted no contradiction," he said with a smile.

"But silence, to one like Sir Flat," replied Alfred, "would have been conviction."

"Then that Sir Flat is one not worth the heeding," said Parkinson.

"Here he comes," cried Jacob.

"Pray, Parkinson, leave us," said Alfred.

"Art thou resolute then to be vicious?"

"By Heaven I'll not attempt his life! I have too much reverence for what you say to do it."

"That is no amendment," replied Parkinson, "which is not entire; though thou mayest not attempt his life, thou wilt expose thine to him."

Alfred's silence spoke for him in the affirmative.

Parkinson continued: "How art thou authorized to endanger what is not thine own?"

"I know I am not authorized; but I have sent a challenge, and now——"

"Thou perceivest the evil thou hast done, and repentest thereof," interrupted Parkin-

son; "wherein thou dost evince more true courage, than if thou shouldst determine to pursue a wrong action because thou didst begin it."

Alfred's thoughts darted to another subject near his heart, and he said, "Is it then better always to recede, than to continue to act in conformity with what we have begun, if we perceive ourselves to have been faulty in the commencement?"

"It is the dictate of reason," replied Parkinson.

"My mind is fixed," said Alfred.

Sir Flat advanced, and with a running leap passed over the stile; in which feat of agility he was followed by Splash, who accompanied him as his second.

"Here we are," cried the baronet; "tip us the poppers, and pace the ground; how will you stand?"

"Here, Sir Flat," Alfred replied; "but not to expose myself to your fire, or to endanger your life by mine."

"D—n it, what do you mean?"

"That I acted under the impulse of passion,

sion, and that returning reason bids me renounce the proceeding."

"Fair, by G—d!" cried Sir Flat; "I was right, and you confess it."

"No, Sir Flat, I still maintain that your opinion of Miss Ellis is erroneous; but I am now convinced that her character wants not my vindication to prove its purity to the world."

"You are nicked, by G—d!" exclaimed Sir Flat; "you've caught yourself in a bad scent, and want to be out of the train; but d—n me, if you shall slack so; I demand satisfaction of you."

"For what, Sir Flat?"

"For contradicting me, and chousing me out of my pop at you; and if that ain't enough for you, you are a coward, a d——d coward!"

Alfred's eyes met Parkinson's; and perceiving that they applauded what he had said, he sufficiently curbed his passion to answer Sir Flat coolly, "That's not enough to rouse me to rashness, while my heart contradicts the imputation."

"Then I'll advertise you, and post you at Tattersall's; by G—d, I'll blow you to the world!"

"The opinions of the multitude are so constantly formed from the voice of an individual, that they are not worth the heeding: men who think for themselves are alone worthy regard, and these decide not on characters from the whims of enmity," said Parkinson.

"D—n me, sir, who are you?" cried Sir Flat, resting his knuckles, which were stuffed into his coat pockets, on his hips, and blustering up to Parkinson.

"I am *myself*," replied Parkinson; "in which I am thy superior."

"Yourself!" exclaimed the baronet with a sneer; "yourself, indeed! D—n it, don't quiz; what right and reason had you to interfere in what I was saying?"

"My right," answered Parkinson, "is sufficiently explained, I think, when I do say, that this youth has my friendship; my reason I was not, indeed, quite clearly in possession of, when I addressed thee."

"Curse me, sir, if I understand you!" said Sir Flat, drawing his hands from his pockets, and pulling up his cravat; "and, by G—d, I won't bear such language!"

"Perhaps, if thou didst; thou wouldst be less pleased than thou now seemest."

"Thee, and thou!" cried Sir Flat; "less imperious, if you please, sir, or by G—d—" and he raised his clenched fist opposite to Parkinson's face.

"Thou wilt fight *me* for speaking in mine own language?" Parkinson filled up the sentence by saying.

"What the devil, are you the old quaker that the girl belongs to?"

"Thou art right, I am an old quaker; and the girl, if thou dost mean Rachel, belongeth to me as long as it pleaseth her so to do."

"I said so—by hell, I said so!"

"Stop, for Heaven's sake, stop! for mercy's sake, don't fire! stop, pray stop your hands!" called out, at this instant, a voice from a distance, which seemed approaching and using its utmost exertions to make itself heard.

These

These sounds arrested the conversation of the parties; and in a few moments appeared, climbing over the stile, the landlord of the Rose and Crown.

"I beg your honours pardons," he exclaimed; "pray excuse me, but it was all along a mistake of mine."

"What dost thou mean?" said Parkinson.

"Humbly to crave both their honours forgiveness," answered Robson, pointing to Sir Flat and Alfred, "for bringing them into this here dispute; and, Heaven be praised! I have got here in time before any mischief was done."

"Curse your palaver, come to the point," cried Sir Flat.

"I will, your lordship; Heaven be praised though, I must say again, that no harm is comed of it! I could never have slept quietly after in my bed, if any accident had befallen your lordship, or Mr. Eringham there, and I the cause."

"D—n you, get on!" exclaimed the baronet.

"I will, your lordship; and glad I am it is
as

as it is : why, I find your lordship and Mr. Eringham were going to fight about something disrespectful as I said of Miss Rachel ; Heaven help me !”

“ You, Robson ?” said Alfred.

“ Ay, but the Lord above knows I did not mean it so, sir.”

“ By G—d you said Parkinson kept her !” exclaimed Sir Flat with vehemence.

“ I know I did, your lordship, I know I did ; but I did not mean it as your lordship took it, indeed, and indeed I did not.”

“ How the devil then ?”

“ Why, yes, I said kept, to be sure, your lordship, but I meant that he did by her as a father—maintained her, your lordship ; nothing out of the way of virtue, indeed, your lordship.”

Parkinson smiled ; Alfred’s eyes glistened with pleasure.

“ Is this your treatment of gentlemen, sir ?” cried Sir Flat, addressing Robson.

“ Indeed, your lordship, I thought I had done the thing that was right.”

“ Then d—n you for a fool in the wrong !”
replied

replied the baronet, extending his foot to kick the landlord, who jumping aside to avoid the threatened insult, Sir Flat overreached himself, and fell down backwards. —He rose hastily, and, though evidently hurt, pretended not to be so, and exclaimed, “By G—d I’ll knock up your house for you, sir! If my lame arm had not been in the way, I’d have closed your day-lights into the bargain, scoundrel!”

“Go thou home,” said Parkinson to Robson, “go thou home;” and the landlord immediately took his advice.

“One advertisement will do for you and him,” cried Sir Flat, looking at Alfred:

“Is not thy resentment subsided with thy proof of error?” asked Parkinson.

“D—n it, sir,” answered Sir Flat, “I’d have you to know, I never gave in in my life.”

“If thou dost mean, that thou didst never confess thyself in the wrong—”

“Yes, I do,” interrupted Sir Flat, “I do; and a d——d long string of disputes I have had in my day, let me tell you.”

“Then

"Then I say," continued Parkinson, "that thou hast the oftener let slip the opportunity of being most honourably in the right."

"You are a curst qucer fift," returned Sir Flat, "and know about as much of life as I do about canting."

"I do not pretend to much more knowledge of it," replied Parkinson, "than the knowledge of its being followed by death."

"You are a d——d wise fellow to know that, upon my soul!" resumed the baronet; "d——d wise, ain't he, Splash?" Sir Flat strained a laugh, and his double echoed him.

Parkinson took the arm of Alfred in his, without seeming to attend to them, and was leading him away.

"Remember, fir, you are a coward," called out Sir Flat.

"I shall also recollect who termed me so," returned Alfred, and walked on.

"True courage and wisdom are ever connected," said Parkinson; "thou hast displayed both, and I revere thee for thy fortitude."

"Praise from Parkinson is a reward for any action or forbearance," replied Alfred.

"How

"How many a life hath been lost, how many a hand stained with blood, from as trivial and as misconceived an expression as that from which thou hast now wisely preserved thyself!" resumed Parkinson.

"It is you who have preserved me," answered Alfred.

"No," said Parkinson, "I did only point out to thee, that thou didst possess the means and will within thine own breast."

"Would I had thought sooner as I do now!—Sir Flat talks of revenge, which may still bring me into difficulties."

"A determined rectitude of conduct is the surest and easiest method both of escaping the snares of the unprincipled, and of extricating thyself from them, shouldst thou be involved in them."

Alfred received the instructive remark in silence, and they walked on some minutes without speaking; the village clock struck eight, as they arrived upon a cross path, which, by one of its ways, led to the centre of the village, and by the other to the house of Parkinson:—"Good-morrow," he said,
 "I have

"I have but one hour before my departure to the city of London, and have much employment to occupy it."

Alfred wished to say a great deal, was irresolute where or how to begin, and had not moulded a sentence for utterance, till Jonathan Parkinson was out of hearing.

CHAP. II.

A fortunate Misconception.

WHILE debating with his mind, Alfred had stopped, and Jacob Lamb, who had followed at a short distance, now came up to him.

"You have gained Parkinson's heart, sir," said he; "though he says little, I see you have."

"By what art do you know so well how to judge him?" asked Alfred.

"Why, sir," replied Jacob, "don't mistake what I am going to say for vanity, in being so bold as to compare myself to Jonathan Parkinson; but whatever I do I can truly say is for the best, so I am sure is what he does; and such plain dispositions soon know one another."

"Then I have acted rightly, you think, in following his counsel?"

"Do you mean in not fighting Sir Flat?"

"Yes,

"Yes, I do."

"Yes," answered Jacob—"Yes."

"That hesitating answer seems to imply that you don't think what you say."

"Yes, sir, I do think it, or I would not have said it; but I had other thoughts mixed with it."

"What were they?"

"Why, sir, your father would have thought otherwise, and——" Jacob hesitated.

Alfred supplied the remainder of the sentence, "and have acted up to his ideas—would you not imply so?"

"Is it not right every man should, sir?"

"Then I have done right, for I have acted up to mine."

"They were not the same last night as they are this morning, sir," said Jacob.

"The warmth of temper I was then in, did not permit me so closely to perceive my error; I wavered between two doubtful points, Jonathan Parkinson's arguments have resolved me."

"Pardon me, sir," said Jacob, "are you sure you adopted them from a conviction of the feeling he meant them to inspire?"

They

They had entered the village, and Alfred quickened his pace, without noticing Jacob's last question.

In the breakfast apartment of his mother's house he found Cranberry and Emily ; the latter of whom, on seeing him, immediately shrieked, and then asked if Sir Flat was killed.

" Killed !" repeated Alfred in a voice of contempt at her folly, and casting a look of reproach at her companion, to whom he well knew she was indebted for the knowledge of what had been in agitation.

" What, is he then only wounded ?" said she.

Alfred uttered a sound of disdain.

" How is it ?—how have you decided it ?" asked Cranberry.

" I wonder you should ask me," replied Alfred, " after what passed between us last night ;—why don't you apply to your friend Sir Flat ?"

" If I have a trifling dispute with a man in an evening," cried Cranberry, affecting to look pleasant, " I drown resentment in sleep,

sleep, and forget it by the morning ;—besides, I wished to consider you equally my friends."

" I deny it," said Alfred : " if you had regarded us your friends alike, you would have esteemed us on an equality, and not have reminded me of his superior rank in the world ;—friendship knows no degrees."

" It should be unalterable," said Cranberry pointedly.

" It must first be mutually principled," replied Alfred, and left the room.

" 'Gad, Eringham's in a devilish humour this morning," cried Cranberry.

" He is often so odd, and comical, now," said Emily.

" Something strange must have occurred in the field ;—I'll run and know what it is."

" Dear me, can't you stop a minute or two ?—you are in such a hurry !"

" An age, if you desire it ;" he threw himself on the sofa by her.

" And yet I should like to know about the duel, for Alfred won't tell me."

" Then I fly."

"Make haste back, will you?"

"I will."—Cranberry rose and opened the door: on the outside appeared Rachel on the point of entering; he ran past her, exclaiming, "Good-morning, how do you do?" and left the house.

"Only think, Rachel," said Emily, "Alfred has been fighting a duel about you."

"A duel! and about me?" She sunk on a chair.

"Yes, and we can't hear whether any body is killed, or only wounded."

Rachel's lips became white, and she fell back in her chair.

Emily proceeded without regarding her emotion; "I wonder which fired first, and whether Sir Flat is killed or not."

"But Alfred!" Rachel with difficulty uttered.

"A sulky creature, not to tell one any thing about what was going to be done, or how!"

Rachel rose from her seat, by an effort almost superior to her strength, reached the door of the apartment with trembling steps, beheld

beheld Alfred standing in the passage, gave a faint shriek, and fell to the floor; Alfred ran and raised her to the sofa;—Emily applied her salts to her nose, and when she perceived her beginning to recover, she exclaimed, “I always said Sir Flat was Rachel’s lover.”

“Folly!” cried Alfred.

“Dear me, I am sure of it,” returned she, “and so would you be, if you were not so perverse that you won’t believe any thing I say: why, what made her faint at seeing you, but for fear you should have killed him?”

Alfred’s feelings underwent the variations of hope and fear, but he spoke not. Mrs. Eringham entered the room as Rachel opened her eyes: the cause of her disorder was explained by Emily according to her own ideas, and by Rachel with truth—that her emotion had been caused by her apprehensions for the safety of a friend.

Alfred then acquainted them with just sufficient of the late occurrence to subdue their alarm, and they seated themselves round the breakfast table, Emily confessing herself not

at all pleased, that her lover had not shown his valour by firing upon Sir Flat; and then telling Rachel, how sorry she felt that their admirers were enemies; to which lamentation Rachel did not reply.

Breakfast was scarcely concluded, before the village clock struck nine, and with the hour arrived the chaise, in which was to be commenced Rachel's second journey to London; Parkinson was in it; knowing which, she rose instantly to depart: she embraced Mrs. Eringham and Emily:—"Kiss Alfred too," said the latter, "or I shall think you don't like him for having quarrelled with Sir Flat."

Alfred ventured upon the liberty which Emily's words had seemed to authorize; his lips quivered as they touched Rachel's cheek, and a tear from his eye fell on her face;—he led her to the chaise;—neither spoke;—she entered it, nodded to Jacob Lamb, who repeatedly bowed to her and Parkinson, and knew not whether the carriage was in motion, till the lost sight of the group who had followed her to it.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A Narrative.

AS they proceeded, Parkinson related to Rachel the particulars of the rencontre between Alfred and Sir Flat, and the recital only tended to render it a still more difficult task for her to subdue a passion, which she had resolved to conceal, if she could not conquer.

Parkinson preferred a slow and easy journey, and they rested, for the night, within twenty miles of the metropolis; and not till Rachel had reclined her head on her pillow, did she recollect that the occurrences of the morning had driven from her memory her intention of introducing, as casual conversation, at breakfast, the command she had received from her parents, and her determination of strictly obeying it.

On the following day, about noon, they arrived in London, and proceeded to a lodging

in the vicinity of the Park, chosen by Parkinson for the convenience of taking his accustomed walk before breakfast.

As Parkinson had resolved not to visit Sir Gilbert Oxmondeley till the next day, the afternoon was passed by him and Rachel in a revival of the events that had befallen her in London, which it was necessary that he should be intimately acquainted with, before he entered upon an attempt at justifying her character;—and here Rachel took occasion to mention to him the services she had received from Miss Darlington, and the promise she had made her of supplying her with a sum, which would enable her to fly from her present mode of life.

Parkinson heard, with pleasure, the good intention she had conceived, promised to furnish her with the means of putting it in execution, and inquired in what street the female, in whose fate she had taken interest, resided: the tears started into Rachel's eyes, and she exclaimed, "Oh, Parkinson, I have ignorantly made this promise, only to tantalize a wretched heart!"

"Why

“ Why so ? ” he asked.

“ We parted so suddenly, and my mind was so occupied at the time, that it never occurred to me to ask either the number of her house, or the name of the street ; and as I both entered it and left it in the night ; I know no possible means of my discovering it.”

Parkinson, who could not blame a faulty execution where the will had been good ; answered her, “ that he would give the means by which a discovery of the female’s abode might be learnt some thought during their stay in London.”

Parkinson always spoke what he really meant ; thus Rachel’s heart became eased by his assurance.

The next morning, Jonathan Parkinson and his fair charge proceeded to Sir Gilbert Oxmondeley’s, and were there informed that the baronet was not at home.

“ Open the door of the vehicle,” said Parkinson to his servant ; “ I shall nevertheless come out.”

His orders were obeyed.

“ Where is thy master ? ” he asked of the

servant who stood within the hall, and whose face was unknown to Rachel.

“ Out, sir,” said the man.

“ Dost thou mean that he is on a journey, or not in his house at this present time ? ”

“ He is not out of town, sir,” replied the man.

“ Then I will enter his house, and await his return unto it.”

“ Why, sir,” said the man hesitatingly, “ my master is at home, to be sure; but he is engaged on very particular business, and can’t see any body.”

“ Mine is also very particular business, and I am willing to await the conclusion of that on which he is now engaged.”—He beckoned to Rachel, and she left the coach;—the footman opened the door of a parlour on the ground floor, and they entered it :—“ What name shall I say, sir ? ” he asked.

“ Jonathan Parkinson.”

Rachel sunk upon a chair; all the scenes through which she had passed in that house, all the miseries to which she had consequently been exposed, burst upon her brain, and their
recollection

recollection brought with it sensations of the most acute nature.

Parkinson wandered slowly about the room, and silence prevailed till the servant returned, and said that Sir Gilbert knew nobody of the name he had announced, and desired he would send in his business.

"Conduct that young lady to him," said Parkinson.

Rachel rose, and took Parkinson's hand, "Indeed, I cannot," she said.

"What can innocence fear?—Go, Rachel, go," he answered.

"If you command it."

"I would have thee face thine enemies boldly; follow thou the man."

"You will come to me?"

Parkinson inclined his head in answer, and Rachel, with trembling steps, followed the servant through the hall: when they turned into the passage which led to the baronet's study, she assumed courage to ask, "whether Sir Gilbert was alone?" She was informed that he was, and knew not whether the intelligence pleased or distressed her.

When the servant arrived at the door, which was open, he stopped for Rachel to pass him; she stopped also, and could scarcely forbear drawing back. Sir Gilbert, who heard footsteps, and imagined it to be only the footman returned with the answer to his inquiry, came to the door, and asked, "What does the man say?" before he perceived he was addressing Rachel:—on raising his eyes towards her, his astonishment was as great as may be conceived, and he exclaimed, "Miss Rachel, is it you?—I am very glad to see you, and yet very angry with you too."

"Sir Gilbert," said Rachel, "I have a friend here, might he be permitted—"

"Show the gentleman in here directly," cried Sir Gilbert, interrupting her.--"Come, walk in, miss, and sit down; here am I, the most unhappy old fellow under the sun; I am more than distracted; I have been cheated and humbugged up hill and down dale, nothing has turned out as I wanted it, all has gone 'cross the grain; and if it was not for the disgrace of the thing that I am a baronet, I believe I should have hanged myself either as yesterday, or to-day."

Rachel did not attempt to interrupt the harangue, and Parkinson's appearance concluded it.

"Thou knowest my name," he said ;
"thine I conclude is Oxmondeley."

"Yes, I am Sir Gilbert," replied the baronet, "and I know who you are now, and so I beg pardon for my rudeness in keeping you so long at the door."

"Thou seest me here,---" Parkinson was beginning.

"And I can pretty well guess your errand," interrupted Sir Gilbert : "however, I am happy to say, you will find I am not to blame. Mr. Parkinson, I have been as ill done by as that young lady ; I have been worried, and tewed, and cheated out of my life and senses."

"I come but to ask of thee," said Parkinson, "where I may find the knight Paragon---"

"Thanks to the d-----, he's dead and gone!" exclaimed Sir Gilbert in a voice and countenance divided between pleasure and mortification.

"Then his agent Blackman is my next pursuit," said Parkinson.

"So he is mine, and be c—d to him," cried the baronet, "I have found out him for a rogue too!--he that I have fostered and maintained, and made of him what he is!--there I had harboured a snake in my bosom too!--the rascal is gone off with eight thousand as good pounds, of my money, as ever were paid in sterling cash; gone off, I tell you, run away, no where to be found, or ever will be I hope upon earth till he drops from the gallows."

"My business in London," Parkinson resumed, as a gentle check to Sir Gilbert's volubility of tongue on his own affairs, "is to endeavour, by discovering the villany practised against my Rachel, to clear her character to the world."

"Well, sir," Sir Gilbert returned, "she and I are fellow-sufferers from the same villain; and if you will but have patience to hear me, I'll explain all that relates to the jewels, my daughter Bet's diamonds, and all about it."

"I do wish to hear what concerneth Rachel," Parkinson replied.

"You shall, sir, you shall.—Well, miss, you recollect the morning that you were sent to prison, on suspicion of having stolen my daughter
daughter

daughter Bet's diamonds, because they were found in your trunk, and your clothes packed up :--well, I am sure I am sorry enough, and ask your pardon too, for having had a finger in the pye, as I may say ; but what could I do, when suspicion was so strong against you ?-- Well, at night madam Bet was missing, gone off with young Morden, I suppose, and who but she ? takes the diamonds along with her ; and this, miss, is what I ain't quite so well pleased with you about, for not telling me what was going to be done, as I find, by your letter, you knew of it."

Here Rachel explained as much relative to Miss Oxmondeley's elopement, as was necessary to the exculpation of herself, and Sir Gilbert heard it with the features of a man who could rail no more because his strength had already been exhausted with rage.

When she stopped, he thus went on :—
 " After much ado, I found up Blackman, and sent him, post haste, after Bet, on the Gretna-green road : as for Sir Bauble, he was no where to be heard of---"

Rachel again interrupted Sir Gilbert, to inform him of what had passed in the prison

that night, between herself, Blackman, and Sir Bauble ; and then inquired whether he had not received a note from her, stating her suspicions of the baronet and the lawyer.

“ No, miss,” answered Sir Gilbert, “ neither I nor any body else that you wrote to, out of that prison, got your letters, they were all given to that rascal Blackman ;--but don’t put me out, or I shall never get through my story. --Well, after a great deal of fretting and fuming, and all to no purpose neither, I went to bed, and in the middle of the night comes a rapping at the door, like thunder, and what should it be but Sir Bauble ? He had been knocked down and robbed, and found half dead in the street by the watchmen ; and so, as he had one of my cards in his pocket, they took him for me, and brought him here : --well, I could do no less by him, as matters stood, than put him to bed, and there was an end of that night’s work.—The next day Blackman returned with a strained ankle, and never the nearer finding Bet ; and he advised me to search your trunks, that I might see if you had stolen any thing more ; so by that means

means I found your letter, telling me that Sir Bauble had made love to you. I thought that could never be, as he was going to be married to Bet, if she had not run away; and Blackman persuaded me you were mad for love of Sir Bauble; and he said he would have you taken care of in a proper place: and so forthwith I wrote a letter to Mr. Morden, to let him know how I thought it was with you; and that too, I have since found, the villain took care should never come to hand; no, no, that would have put a stop to their rascally doings.—Well, so went on matters for two or three days, Lady Paragon mighty sweet upon me, as I thought; and Blackman persuading me to marry and disinherit Bet: and I never had a better-mind to do any thing in my life; but I was not hasty about it, because I knew it was a thing that might always be done:—so the very morning that Blackman brought me word that you was run away from the mad doctor's, he and Lady Paragon were shut up together an hour or two, here, in my study: so then Blackman came to me, and he began

by telling me, that her ladyship was in a very unpleasant situation for a woman of her delicacy :—now this I did not much mind, miss, for it often was the way with her, you know :—well, I asked him what was the matter, however ; he said she had been dunned by the man of whom she had bought her new house in Grosvenor square, for the money, which ought to have been paid some weeks before, but that she could not at that time command it, without she fold out to great loss, and begged to know whether I would lend her the money on a bond. I, for my part, thought she was as rich as me ; so, fool like, I let her have it ; and she signed the bond, and that's all I'm ever likely to have for my money ;—curse them all, I say, for a pack of dirty—”

: “ Proceed in thy narrative, friend,” said Parkinson.

“ It is cursed hard though, let me tell you, Mr. Parkinson, to be disappointed in all your views, and cheated out of your money into the bargain, especially by those that you have always done well by, and that
ought

ought to be your friends, and that you always thought were so."

The baronet heaved a deep sigh, and then continued : " Sir Bauble was all this time getting worse and worse every hour, from the cold he caught by lying next thing to naked in the street, and in the night of that day he died. Well, then her ladyship was all hysterics, and cryings, and faintings, as you may suppose ; I can't say but I was sorry myself, as I knew no harm of him then ; but, however, as I said, he had not wanted for care and physic, and his time was come :— he was in my house, as I told you before, so I thought I could do no less than take the trouble of the funeral off her ladyship upon myself ; so the next morning, a little before noon, I sent off Mrs. Coke to fetch Blackman to help me in the management, and told her to tell him by the way what had happened. — Presently comes back Mrs. Coke with the news, that Blackman, who but he ! had sailed the night before in a ship from Gravesend for America, his family was gone with him, and the maid that
told

told Mrs. Coke of it, had had her wages paid her the day before.

“ I went to her ladyship with the news, and then she was in ten times worse fits than before ; I could make nothing out of her ; and on my return home, I was going to look for Mrs. Coke to hear what she knew once more, when what did I hear, but Chapman abusing Blackman for all the rogues in the creation ! I was determined to know why ; so I sent for her, and commanded her to explain her words ; and she told me (it came out between fright and disappointment) that Blackman had promised her a hundred pounds for putting Bet’s diamonds into Miss Rachel’s trunk, that she could not exactly tell why it was done, only that Blackman had given her to understand, that Sir Bauble was fonder of Miss Rachel than of Bet. I was thunder-struck, you may think ; so I packed her off to a justice in a minute, and, on her own confession, she is gone to Clerkenwell for two months hard labour, instead of her hundred pounds.

“ After

" After that was done, I began to think of what was past, and I soon saw the villany of that pair of imps, and the truth of your letter.—Well, miss, not to trouble you much more about myself, when the funeral of that deceitful young dog was over, I insisted upon the payment of her ladyship's bond; and I was in such a rage with them altogether, that I swore I'd seize her effects if she did not pay me; for what was she then to me, any thing more than to get back from her the money she owed me ?

" Whence a done, when the long and the short came out, for I brought her ladyship to her confession by my threats, it seemed that she and her hopeful son had not a pound a-piece between earth and skies, but had meant to have grown rich by marrying Bet; and that rascal Blackman had been on their side all the time instead of mine; and, moreover, that the money she had borrowed of me was to keep her from being sent to prison for her gaming debts; she had given it to Blackman to pay her creditors, and he was gone off with it in his own pocket :—
was

was there ever such a gang of rogues got together !—I'll be judged by any christian soul, if ever any thing was known to equal it.—Well, I could get nothing by sending her ladyship to jail, so I e'en left her to fare as she could ; but since that, one of her fashionable creditors has had mercy enough on her to lodge her in the Fleet ; and there she may stay as long as she lives for me, I promise her, without she can manage to game the eight thousand pounds back again ; and if she does that, she shall hear from me."

CHAP. IV.

Literati and Critics.

“WELL, fir!” continued Sir Gilbert, after a momentary pause, as Jonathan Parkinson remained silent, “I see nothing that can be done in this business, as both the offenders are gone out of reach by different roads.”

“There is a third,” replied Parkinson, “of whom it becometh me, I think, for the benefit of society, to make an example;—he who did confine her in his house, pretending that he did believe her afflicted with lunacy.”

“I fancy, Mr. Parkinson,” returned Sir Gilbert, “you’ll find that no easy matter: he’ll plead that Blackman told him that she was mad; and if you say she is not, he’ll answer you that he can’t tell, for she was not with him long enough for him to find it out.”

“All this is true,” resumed Parkinson, “but he hath more to answer for.”

“Ay, ay, if that was the case, I say nothing.

thing, there Miss Rachel must speak for herself:—What was his name, miss?—Who was he?”

“That we would learn of thee, Rachel knoweth it not.”

“I am sure, Mr. Parkinson, I can’t tell you, I wish I could, for I have too much respect for Miss Rachel, not to wish her enemies punished, now I have found out that she really is as good a young lady as I always thought her, till this cross-hoppled business came to puzzle me. I know no more of the man than that Blackman said he had a friend that would take care of her, a mad doctor he gave me to understand; but if Miss Rachel knows where he lives, the business is soon done.”

“Added to my ignorance of this city,” said Rachel, “my agitation was so great, both at the time of my going to the house, and of my leaving it, that I am certain I should not know the street again, were I carried into it.”

“It shall be my first business,” said Parkinson, “to endeavour to learn of the jailor
if

if he was acquainted with the man who did accompany him, Blackman, on the morning that Rachel was taken from prison."

"Ay, do, Mr. Parkinson, and perhaps you may hear of some more of their tricks from him."

Parkinson rose: "Come, Rachel," he said, "I will go now to the prison, if Sir Gilbert will direct me to it."

"And Miss Rachel will stay meanwhile with me," cried the baronet.

Parkinson looked at Rachel for her answer.

"If you will permit me," she said, "I will accept Sir Gilbert's invitation; I had rather not again behold the scene of past unhappiness; beside, I want some conversation with Sir Gilbert."

"So do I with you, miss," added the baronet.

Parkinson hesitated not to conclude that Sir Gilbert's daughter was the subject of the conversation which they mutually wished to discuss, so readily consented to leave Rachel till his return with the baronet, from whom having received his direction where to find the prison, he set out on his visit to Mr. Pelf.

It

It was, indeed, of Eliza that Rachel wished to speak ; and no sooner had Parkinson left the room, than she inquired of Sir Gilbert, whether he had ever heard of his daughter since her departure. He answered as she expected, that he neither had, nor wished it ; for she did not suppose that the scheme he had planned for Eliza's happiness, having turned out a false one, would reconcile him to one equally faulty on her side ;—she endeavoured to say something in the palliation of a conduct she knew to have been wrong, but was not long distressed how to continue the subject, as the baronet, though with all the politeness of which he was capable, desired the topic to be dropped.

Till the return of Parkinson, Sir Gilbert entertained his visitor with broken repetitions of the story he had before related, and his own remarks upon it more at large ; but she only learnt from his discourse, in addition to what she had before heard, that it was Sir Flat who had arrested her ladyship.

When Jonathan Parkinson came back, he informed them that he had found Mrs. Pelf alone at home, who had told him that she
had

had not been present at Rachel's departure, and knew not who had taken her away, but that she made no doubt her husband could inform him; but then she said, he would not be in London for at least four or five days, as he was out in the country on business. "I have left my address with the woman," continued Parkinson, "desiring that intelligence may be brought me of her husband's return, and shall remain in this city, to await the success of my attempt."

Sir Gilbert invited Parkinson and Rachel to dine with him on the following day, which Parkinson said business in the city obliged him to decline doing. Sir Gilbert then pressed him for the one after, and Parkinson agreed to visit him, considering that Rachel being seen by the servants to be restored to Sir Gilbert's friendship, would be no inconsiderable proof of her innocence, if any doubt of it yet remained in the circle of those who had known the story which had falsely impeached her.

Sir Gilbert insisted on handing Rachel to the carriage himself; and as he assisted her in
getting

getting into it, he gave her hand a gentle squeeze, with which she was by no means displeased, as it assured her of the return of cordiality in one, whose unjust suspicions of her, in consideration of the aggravations under which he had conceived them, the equity of her heart had immediately taught her to forgive, on his joint confession of his error, and request of pardon.

The next day, Parkinson went on the execution of his business into the city, and Rachel descended into the shop of the book-feller in whose house they lodged, to beg of him to lend her something to read.

He pointed to a door at the end of the shop, and said, "That room, ma'am, contains my circulating library; you will find in it most old and new publications, any of them are at your service."

He opened the door for her, and she entered the room, which was large; the books were ranged round on shelves; in the middle stood a table, on which lay the newest pamphlets, and the newspapers of the day; several persons, male and female, were scattered in
various

various parts of the apartment, some loungers, some listeners, a great many talkers, and a very few readers.

She advanced to a shelf, and whilst reading the different names on the bindings, in order to select one for perusal, she heard a lady, who had just entered, say to the librarian, "Young man, have you got any thing new fit to read?"

"Here's the Match-Girl, ma'am."

"The Match-Girl! that must be low stuff;—written by a woman too!"

"The Skeleton, ma'am."

"Another woman! I wonder women can't content themselves with their needles."

"If every body decided upon their merits so prematurely as you," said her companion, who was no other than the Sir Harry who had handed out Lady Varny from the opera the first evening of Rachel's seeing her, "I think it would."

"Lord, Sir Harry," she cried, "you don't imagine I can patronize every body."

"Oh, no, very far from it," he returned, pointedly; "but why condemn unheard?"

"Do you think my condemning a book prejudices its sale, then?" said she, affectedly.

"Not at all," he replied.

Dissatisfied with his answer, the lady turned to one of her own sex, and asked what she had been reading.

"I never read any thing but ghost stories," returned the other; "and I think spectres are grown rather scarce."

"Here is the Castle of Ollada," said the librarian.

"What?" said the first lady.

The librarian repeated the name.

"Oh! the worst thing in print," she cried.

"Is it?" asked the other lady;—"what is it about?"

"I can't tell you," she replied, "for I don't know a single soul that has read it;" and walked to the other end of the room.

"Shall I put it down in your name, ma'am?" said the librarian to the ghost-admiring lady.

"Oh dear, no," she said, "I am sure I shan't read a thing that ain't the fashion." Rachel could not forbear an inward smile at

at the conversation she had overheard, and taking a volume from the shelf, was opening it in various parts to learn its character ere she concluded on its perusal, when an old lady (if such they are) and two young ones came in—"Here, Mr. What's your name," said the apparent mother, "you buy every novel that's published to let out, don't you?"

"Oh yes, ma'am."

"Have you had the Animated Portrait, yet?"

"No, ma'am, we intend to get it directly."

"Have you bespoken it?"

"No, ma'am; but I'll send to the publisher directly, if you wish to read it."

"Oh, no, stay, I am glad you have not got it; I subscribed for it, to please a friend who is acquainted with the author, and if you will take my copy, I shall be much obliged to you."

"Oh yes, ma'am," replied the man, "at the price we can have it from the printer."

"How much is that?"

The librarian informed her.

“What, only so much!—I expected to have made something by it, as I see the two volumes advertised at seven shillings, and it was only six to subscribers.”

The librarian smiled.

“And so I must lose by it, if I sell it to you?”

The librarian bowed.

“Lard, mamma, take what he offers, rather than nothing,” said one of the daughters.

“Well,” resumed the matron, “here it is in my muff.”

She laid down the books, and the librarian the money, which the daughter who had just spoken immediately took up.

“Catharine, let my money alone,” said the mother.

“Lard, mamma, I’m sure it’s mine; Lord B—— gave the books to me,” cried Miss.

“We’ll decide that at home,” replied the mother, with a look that silenced Miss, and caused her also to surrender the cash.

The other daughter had, in the mean time, been making interest with the librarian, to have

have the books home again with her, gratis, till the next day, having, as she declared, forgot an incident she wished to revive.

The lady who doted on phantoms came up to her at the instant she had obtained her request, and asked, "what she had got there?"

"The thing," she answered, "that every body has been subscribing to, for the benefit of that sea captain's wife and seven children; I can't think of their name; but one must do something for them, you know."

"Oh, to be sure; I'll look at the list myself."

The mother and daughters curtsied to the last speaker, and left the room.

"Do you take in subscriptions for that thing, Mr.——?" said the remaining lady.

"Yes, ma'am, here is the list," answered the librarian, taking the proposals down from a nail.

"Mercy preserve me!" cried the lady, "there ain't above a dozen names;—it can't be a fashionable thing, I'm sure."

"Ours is only a small part of the subscribers,

scribers, ma'am ; almost every bookseller takes them in."

" Is it under any body's patronage ?"

" No, ma'am."

" Who is at the top ?"

" This begins with—Anonymous, six copies, ma'am."

" Pugh, the creature lives in the city, I shan't subscribe, I'm sure," cried the lady, and left the library.

Rachel begged to see the paper ; and having received the certain information that the sum collected was for the benefit of seven fatherless children and their mother, she put down her initials for a single copy, and slid a guinea into the hands of the librarian.

The curious part of the company in the room, who had observed Rachel's last action, walked past the list as soon as it was again hung up, under various pretences for moving to the other end of the room, but could not satisfy themselves in learning the name of the fair subscriber.

Having chosen a book, which promised her

her entertainment, she immediately rose to return to her apartment, as she neither wished to be recognized by Sir Harry, nor interrupted in her reading by the voices of those in the library. In passing through the shop, a play-bill caught her eye; it was her favourite amusement, and she stopped to read it; it advertised a new comedy, and an approved pantomime for that evening: the master of the shop, who observed what had attracted her notice, gave her a small one from the window to take up with her; she accepted it, and, having examined the particulars, gave her thoughts up to the interesting fate of 'Angelina,' till the return of Parkinson called her attentions to him.

CHAP. V.

Reflection in a Play-house!!! and a Love Letter.

ON the table lay the play-bill; Parkinson took it into his hand, cast his eyes over it, and, as he put it down, said, "Didst thou ever see a stage performance in this city?"

"Several," answered Rachel;

"That implieth that they do please thee — Doth it not?" he asked.

"I confess they did."

"Dost thou wish to see that which will be done this evening?"

"My inclinations will readily submit to my circumstances," she replied, smiling.

"How dost thou mean?" said Parkinson.

"That as you can't go with me, I shall be equally contented any where else."

"Wherefore can I not?"

"I thought you never went," she returned.

"I do

"I do understand thee," he answered; "but I am not so much of any sect, as to think all its opinions right ones, and I am so much of every sect, as to see good in all, and to follow it in mine own conduct.—Why should I debar myself the amusement of an hour or two, or three, which a stage performance may afford me, when I do perceive no harm in the enjoyment of it?—The abstinences of prejudice are as much beneath a thinking mind, as the blind prosecution of what is called fashion is a disgrace to it.—I trust, for the credit of the kingdom at large, that pieces of immoral tendency are not enacted on the public stages, and if they were, I have enough confidence in myself to say, that I should not return the worse for having witnessed them; it is not the beholding of such scenes, but the imitating of them, which is the hurtful part."

"I never saw any such on the stage," said Rachel.

"I do believe it," answered Parkinson; "for on our youth their consequences might be bad."

"Without they had the wisdom of those who refrain from seeing them," replied Rachel, laughing, "which I imagine must be from the consciousness of a weak nature, which durst not behold immortality for fear it should prove contagious."

"That is not a weak nature," said Parkinson, "but a wise one, which avoideth an error it cannot withstand."

"But," asked Rachel, "what can be the nature of that man, who has sufficient fortitude to avoid the temptation of being led into doing ill, but, having once suffered the temptation, cannot forbear the commission of sin?"

"He must be one who giveth more regard to prejudice than to truth," answered Parkinson.

At the proper hour they went to the theatre; and the comedy being received with applause, Rachel derived the entertainment she had promised herself, and, at the end of the play, she enquired of Jonathan Parkinson, "whether he had seen the performance with pleasure?"

"It hath amused me," he replied, "for the

the time designed; but I cannot help lamenting, if we should be judged a century hence, by our stage performances of the present day, when the fashions and whims which gave them birth shall have died away and be forgotten, that we shall be accounted by our posterity to have been even more frivolous than we are."

"You would doubtless have instruction proceed from the stage?" said Rachel.

"I would have, at least, the opposite characters of virtue and vice more strongly marked: I would have immorality dressed in less alluring colours: the laugh it doth create, is oftener on its side than against it; it is too frequently the prominent feature of the piece, and ultimately rewarded: it should be made a more striking example of derision, lest the foibles of its character, and the improprieties of its conduct, by the neatness of their execution, and risible turn given to them, provoke imitation instead of contempt."

The pantomime, which succeeded, was splendid in the extreme, and the machinery inimitably constructed; and Rachel, who

had never before beheld a spectacle of the kind, saw it with much pleasure.

"This pleaseth me," said Parkinson; "ingenuity, in every shape, must be seen with admiration by every disposition but that of the envious man."

"Or those who wish to shew the excellence of their judgment by disapproving every thing they behold," said Rachel.

"Those do betray a selfishness of temper," returned Parkinson, "which nippeth in its bud every other good quality that might spring from their hearts. Regularly to disapprove, from caprice, the labours of others, must finally lessen those who do practise it in their own esteem, from which passion they did probably begin the custom; for the world doth ever look slightly upon those who do too highly regard themselves, which no means can more strongly display a man to do, than to carp at every thing which cometh in his way; and none who arrogate to themselves a false superiority, in any point, can sustain their assumed character in opposition to the true sentiments of the world."

"It

"It is a combination of envy, selfishness, and jealousy," said Rachel.

"No, not the latter," replied Parkinson; "there is still a surer clue to its detection; the jealous person doth begin by a lavish praise of whatever quality or thing exciteth his jealousy, and when he hath raised thy pleasure by speaking to thine own feelings, he will find subtle terms for revoking all the merit he hath before bestowed: this is the acme of jealousy."

In the theatre, Rachel had looked round in vain for Miss Darlington; she was disappointed in not having seen her, and yet hoped her absence might be the consequence of her reformed life.

The following day was passed by them, according to their promise, with Sir Gilbert Oxmondeley; and his attentions to Rachel were so pointed and friendly, that Parkinson, who conceived them as apologies for his former conduct, did not spend the hours without pleasure, in witnessing the reparation doing to Rachel. At their departure, Sir Gilbert, thanking them repeatedly for
their

their visit, and pressing them to repeat it, informed Rachel that he should send the clothes which she had left in his house to her lodgings on the next morning.

Accordingly, on entering the parlour at the hour of breakfast, her trunks were the first objects that presented themselves to her view. Parkinson was not yet returned from his walk, and curiosity to know whether she had sustained any loss prompted her to examine their contents : on lifting up the lid of the first she had unlocked, she saw lying on the top a letter directed to herself ; the handwriting was Sir Gilbert's ; she opened it, and read the following words :—

“ Dear Miss Rachel,

“ Once when you did not very well know how to open your mind to me by word of mouth, you put a letter in a trunk for me to find ; now I am in the same kind of case, and don't very well know how to open my mind to you by word of mouth : why, I have done by you as you did by me, and I've put a letter in a trunk for you to find.—So far so good, for how it came there ;
and

and now for what it is about :—well, then, the reason why is this; you know enough of what has happened to me with regard to Bet, and my thoughts about her, not to want to have them told to you over again; and also that I said I was resolved to marry, and disinherit her; but I never told you whom I meant to have :—now for it then; upon you my mind is set; I love and like you better than any woman breathing, and if you can consent to be my wife, I'll settle on you five hundred a year during my life; and when I die, half my fortune shall be yours, and the other half our children's.—Now don't answer this, hastily, I beseech, but pro and con it over in your own mind, by yourself; and if you can but make my proposal suit your liking, you'll make the happiest man alive of your truly respectful, and sincerely loving,

“ Gilbert Oxmondeley.”

“ P. S. My respects to Mr. Parkinson, if you please.”

Rachel's surprise and risibility were equally excited by the perusal of this letter: these passions, however, soon abated, and she then

immediately set about composing a negative answer, which she determined to write in a style of acknowledgment equal to the compliment Sir Gilbert had paid her : she concluded it as Parkinson entered the apartment, and, giving both the letters into his hand, asked his opinion of what she had done : at the first he smiled ; her answer he approved, and it was accordingly sent off to the baronet.

Their conversation, at breakfast, ran upon the event of the morning ; and Parkinson inclined to pity the man, who had apparently been harassed, by the disappointment of his mistaken ideas of happiness, into forming views more ridiculous than those which had proved fallacious.

Parkinson then inquired, " whether Rachel had ever seen the monuments in Westminster-abbey ? " She replied, " that she never had, and that she had often wished it. " " We will go thither then this morning, " said Parkinson ; " I have a letter to write, which when I have concluded, I will attend thee. "

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

A Walk amongst the Tombs.

AT the time appointed they went to the Abbey, and Rachel read, with pleasure, on their monuments, the names of those men of genius, with whom she had often almost fancied herself acquainted, from her intimacy with their works; and now the awful stillness, so striking to every stranger on entering the recesses of the Abbey from the busy streets of London, made her even apt, from the strength of combined ideas, to conceive herself in company with their shades.

Whilst viewing the stone raised to the memory of Pope, she was internally repeating :

“ Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar,
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore :
What future bliss he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.”

As she concluded the lines, two young men
passed

er, to whom her attention was turned of them exclaiming, "Look, Jack, the mark of interrogation!"—"What, the little crooked thing that asks questions?" vociferated the other.—"Ay, so it is, upon my honour!" And they passed on, laughing at the remarks which they had themselves thought very clever.

"How illiberal is it," said Parkinson, "to single out the flaws of a character, to renew the memory of the man by! of the dead, in particular; it is my opinion, if we can say nothing in their praise, that silence is their due."

"But Pope had his virtues," answered Rachel.

"That he had, his enemies are the best proof," replied Parkinson.

"But he had his friends also."

"Some few will discern, however the multitude may suffer themselves to be blinded by prejudice."

"Would you say that virtue gets us enemies, rather than conciliates us friends?"

"Your question doth tempt me to return

an

an illiberal answer against the majority of the world," said Parkinson.

"Then you answer me in the affirmative?"

"The majority of the world," returned Parkinson, "is too ill educated not to be sensible of envy; and the honourable conduct of our actions, which we do call virtue, will give him, who doth possess it, a conscious respect, which those who have not the fortitude to follow his example in order to acquire, cannot bear to see him possess."

Passing on, they observed some workmen measuring a vacant space in the wall, and a person, who appeared their principal, taking down notes upon a paper in his hand.

Parkinson inquired, "for whom a monument was about to be erected?"—The showman belonging to the Abbey answered, "that it would be a long time before it was placed in the Abbey, but it was in memory of a baronet just dead, one Sir Bauble Paragon."

Parkinson and Rachel exchanged looks, from which the man, who was conducting them, directly gathered, that they were not strangers to the name he had just mentioned;
and

and he added, "If you knew the gentleman, ma'am, you will perhaps be interested to see the design of the monument intended to be raised to him; Mr. Pebble has it in his hand, I'll borrow it for you."

On one side of the monument stood Fame, pointing with her right hand to the inscription; and holding, in her left, the trumpet from which she was conveying Sir Bauble's praise to the four corners of the wind, which were represented on the top of the stone by four winged heads blowing in different directions; on the base beneath the stone stood, on one side, Hope, with the anchor falling from her hand; and on the other sat Charity, with her eyes fixed in melancholy upon the name of him she bewailed, and wringing her hands.

The inscription was as follows :

As a slender tribute
To the exalted memory
of
Sir Bauble-Paragon, Knight ;
Descended from an illustrious line of progenitors,
Of which he was the
Last ;

Endowed

Endowed by nature with an excellent understanding,
Which had been ripened by travel and study
Into the most profound knowledge :
Inherently gifted, not less with the purest virtues,
than the more essential love of their
practice ;

The friend of indigence, the scourge of immorality,
The patron of merit, the protector of innocence,
The most tender of sons, the most worthy of men,
The pattern for his sex,
The most revered of beings,
And the best :

This monument is erected
By his bewailing and disconsolate
Mother.

“ Is it possible,” cried Rachel, after having returned the paper into the hands of him from whom she had received it, “ that vanity, however great during life, should wish to extend itself beyond that term; that it should endeavour to support its consequence, by hypocrisy, even in the grave ?”

“ I did never think that human vanity, great as it is, had been so very great, or supported by such false means,” said Parkinson ; “ but what we do see we must believe to be, although we may wish that our senses did deceive us.”

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

*Of which all who feel the Truth, will not
confess they do.*

ON the following morning, while at breakfast, the master of the house entered with two new reviews in his hand, which he offered to Parkinson for his perusal.

"I do thank thee, friend, for thy civility," said Parkinson, "but I do never read those books."

On the bookseller's leaving the room, Parkinson took a volume of a novel from the table, and began reading in it: when he, after some time, laid it from his hand, Rachel said, "I did not think, after seeing you refuse a review, that you would have condescended to take up a novel."

"Are the merits of a book stamped on its outside?" asked Parkinson; "or didst thou think me one of those surly readers, who
abjure

jure every individual, because it is of a class which holdeth not the first pre-eminence in literature ?”

“ I thought a review would have been more suited to your taste.”

“ Thou art mistaken, then, for I do like to think for myself ;—how do I know that those whose thoughts I buy, are either competent to decide on the merits of the book they do review, or not actuated in their decision by prejudice ? And were I convinced that they were free from what I here do make doubts, it is a much more probable than unlikely thing, that our opinions should differ ; for even the opinions of these critics by trade are sometimes directly opposite.”

“ Why then are these publications held in so much estimation ?”

“ Because every thing which hath in it a little share of mystery, as these books have, by the names of their authors being concealed, carrieth with it more weight in the world, than any publication would do, which did come even decidedly from the pen of a character eminent in letters.”

“ Do

“ Do you not then think them beneficial to society ?”

“ To two classes I do ;—to those who do not choose to think for themselves, or, what is the same thing, who cannot ; for every one that hath the ability, doth choose to think for himself ;—and to those who do receive the profits of their sale.”

“ You are not a critic then yourself ?”

Parkinson smiled.

“ I don't mean to ask whether you write,” replied Rachel.

“ If thou dost mean in the world at large,” answered Parkinson, “ I have too little and too much sense to be one ; in a state where nothing is perfect, it is he who seeketh perfection, and not he who faileth to obtain it, that is the weak-minded man : besides, it is so much more easy to criticise, than either to do, or to improve what is done—for criticism is rarely amendment—that to criticise, is rather to show that we do wish to be esteemed judges, than to prove our judgment.”

“ I have often seen what has given me satisfaction,

tisfaction, severely censured in the reviews," said Rachel.

"It is always my system," replied Parkinson, "where I can say nothing in favour, not to speak in injury; I could not reconcile to my conscience the publishing of an opinion which should perhaps defeat the second attempt of an industrious man to gain his subsistence by his pen:—advance not to me the futile apology of there being other trades better adapted to his capacity;—each man is himself the best judge of what he is able to perform; and, if he were not, the apology doth not hold good:—a man who hath lost a leg, or is by any other means a cripple, cannot work in husbandry, but he may be able to write; say then, that this calamity doth not prevent his being a shoemaker, a baker, or any other manual trade; who hath told us that his left hand is not incapable of assisting its fellow, with which alone he can write;—or if he doth possess all these faculties perfect, that he is not deprived of his sight, (for such instances have been since the days of Milton) and compelled to dictate his thoughts for the maintenance of a helpless family!"

Parkinson returned his eyes to his book, and Rachel sat reflecting on his words.

About an hour after noon, the door was thrown open, and Sir Gilbert Oxmondeley announced: Rachel immediately escaped into her chamber, and Parkinson was left without the option of refusing to see the visitor.

After the usual salutations, Sir Gilbert began by saying, "Well, Mr. Parkinson, I suppose Miss Rachel has told you of what has been passing between her and me?"

"She hath."

"I am exceedingly sorry to find her so disinclined to my proposal, I had set my heart so strongly upon her being my Lady Oxmondeley!" He sighed, and then added, "Do you think her mind is made up for good and all, Mr. Parkinson?"

"Conceive it not any disrespect to thyself, my replying that I am certain it is; disparity of years must plead the apology of her abrupt refusal."

Why, I can't say but that I am older than her, to be sure, Mr. Parkinson; but I would have done all in my power to have made her happy."

A short

A short silence ensued, which Sir Gilbert broke by asking "if Miss Rachel was at home?"

"She is," answered Parkinson.

"I should be very happy in a few minutes conversation with her," said Sir Gilbert.

Parkinson replied, that if the further urging of his suit was the purport of the discourse he wished to hold with her, he thought it more adviseable for him not to see her. Sir Gilbert answered that it really was not; and Rachel was induced, by Parkinson's persuasions, to give the baronet that conference which common good manners entitled him to expect.

"Well, Miss Rachel," said Sir Gilbert, after a few introductory sentences had passed between them, "it is always a rule with me, when any thing falls out cross, to endeavour to drive it from my head by something pleasant, which was the reason of my offering myself to you, in consequence of this ungrateful conduct of Bet's; and now you have thrown cold water on my expectations again, and cut me out of my heart's wish, I

must try and find something else to drive away the thought of that."

The baronet paused, and Rachel could only bow in answer to what had been said.

"Well then," he continued, "the long and short of what I wanted to ask you is this: Can you, miss, that know something of the world, and, I dare say, a good deal about a great many people in it, recommend me to any body pleasant and clever for a wife?"

All Parkinson's natural gravity failed to restrain his muscles from relaxing into a smile; and it was not till a pretended cough had disguised Rachel's propensity to laugh, that she ventured to declare herself wholly inadequate to the important task.

After some farther discourse on the same topic, in which the baronet repeatedly declared how happy he should be in the advice of Rachel, he departed, leaving her not a little delighted by the easy turn his thoughts had taken, and Parkinson equally amused, by the idea of a man holding his heart ready prepared to receive an impression from an object which was to be pointed out to him at the discretion of a third person.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Event of a Game at Ball.

PARKINSON and Rachel had now been twelve days in London; and Pelf, whose absence detained them in it, was not yet returned:—Parkinson, who was by habit an early riser, never broke his fast till a walk, which he usually extended to six or seven miles, had given him a natural appetite for his meal, and the retired walks of Hyde Park were now the substitutes of his fields and plantations.

On the morning which commenced the thirteenth day of his residence in the metropolis, he had, consonant with his custom, entered the Park an hour after day-break: the air was thick, and a damp mist was falling; but, impregnable to cold from habit, he wound his silk handkerchief round his neck and walked on. As spots of retirement were always preferred by him, he pro-

ceeded to those near the Serpentine river : the air after some time began to rarify, but it was still too much condensed by the fog to render objects discernible at more than a very short distance. He had proceeded as far as his inclination led him to ramble, and was on the point of returning, when a pistol was fired within a few yards of him ; he stopped, and looked round : the report of a second followed in less than a minute ; he saw the flash, and it enabled him to determine on the spot whence it had been fired : —he stood some moments undecided whether to advance or recede, and had scarcely resolved on the former when two men on horseback rode furiously past him ; their faces he could not accurately distinguish, but he imagined that he had some recollection of one of them : their speed appeared to him a certain indication that evil had been the event of the pistols he had just heard, and this determined him to hasten to a spot where his assistance might prove acceptable.

As he advanced, he saw a man sitting upon
the

the ground, and one who stood by him, tying a handkerchief round his arm: he still proceeded:—their backs hitherto had been turned towards him, but the one that was standing, turning round his head, on hearing the sound of Parkinson's steps, discovered the countenance of Jacob Lamb. Parkinson stopped short in surprise:—Jacob felt confounded and ashamed; and as the consciousness of a first error often leads unguardedly into the commission of a second for its apology, he seemed willing to excuse his situation by exclaiming, "D—n Sir Flat, and all that belongs to him!"

This exclamation immediately opened to Jonathan Parkinson a view of all that had passed, and he advanced in silence to the person sitting on the ground, who was, as he expected, Alfred Eringham; and found him fainting through loss of blood.

The present was a time that required action, and Parkinson did not waste it in words; with a deep sigh he unwound the handkerchief from his own neck, and whilst tying it over the bandage which Jacob had

before bound about the shoulder of Alfred, and through which the blood had already forced its way, he bid Jacob fetch some water.

Jacob was so desirous of doing something which might be of service, that his anxiety absorbed his faculties.—“ He had nothing to put the water in.—What should he do?” he asked, with the tears in his eyes.

“ Didst thou never drink from thy hat when a boy ?” said Parkinson in a voice of impatience.

Jacob now dashed himself for a fool, and ran to get the water.

“ Give it to me,” said Parkinson to Jacob when he returned, “ and now do go thou and order hither a coach.”

Jacob left his hat, and ran to execute Parkinson’s commands.

It was some time before Alfred opened his eyes; they then fixed, with surprise, on Parkinson, but he did not attempt to speak.—Parkinson felt displeasure; but the state of him against whom it was conceived checked his giving utterance to his feelings, and he endeavoured

endeavoured to speak a few sentences meant to sooth.—Alfred pressed his hand in his with a look of thanks, and, again closing his eyes, leaned his head upon Parkinson's side.

Apprehension for the safety of Alfred made the time appear unusually long to Parkinson till Jacob returned with the coach.—Alfred was lifted into it, and Parkinson and Jacob placed themselves on his either side to support him :—as Parkinson's lodgings were at that time nearer than any other place he could at that moment fix upon, the coachman was ordered to proceed thither.

Alfred being conveyed to Parkinson's bed, a surgeon was immediately sent for.—On examination of the wound, which was a little below the shoulder, the surgeon pronounced a ball to have lodged in the part, and immediate extraction to be necessary for the preservation of his patient's life.

Rachel was still in bed, and Parkinson hoped she would not rise till the operation had been performed. Half an hour brought back the surgeon with his requisite instruments : the groan which accompanied the

act of taking out the ball escaped Alfred's lips at the moment Rachel was passing the door of the chamber, in her descent from her own; she thought only of Parkinson, and stopped to listen, half convinced and half doubtful whether she had heard aright: a second exclamation followed, and, trembling, from a confusion of dreadful ideas, she sunk upon the stairs, unable to speak or move.

In a few seconds, Jacob Lamb came from the chamber to fetch something that was required within it: Jacob started at seeing her; she recovered her utterance on perceiving him, and pronounced his name.

"For the Lord's sake, Miss Rachel, go down stairs," said Jacob.

"Is Parkinson ill?—What is the matter?—I conjure you tell me!" she cried.

Parkinson heard her voice, and came hastily from the chamber.

"Thank Heaven I see you!" she exclaimed, springing up to meet him the moment he appeared.

He took the hand she had extended towards

wards him, and, leading her away by it, said,
 "Do thou come with me into the parlour."

"Who is there?" said Rachel, pointing to the chamber. "Whose voice did I hear?—How comes Jacob Lamb here?"

Parkinson continued silent till they were arrived in the parlour, and then informed her, that the person whose groans she had heard was Alfred Eringham, who had been wounded in a duel.

As it ever had been a secret to all but herself, that she had ever beheld Alfred with any nearer esteem than that of friendship, Parkinson was not a little surprised, by the deadly paleness which overspread Rachel's countenance, and the trembling that seized her entire frame, immediately on his replying to the questions she had advanced to him.

"Be not so much alarmed," said Parkinson; "I do not fear his welfare, for the ball hath already been extracted."

"But he must linger, and he may die!" exclaimed Rachel, and burst into tears.—
 "Who is with him?" she continued when

able to articulate, "who will nurse him?—His mother and Emily are not here—they cannot be here; are they?"

"No," answered Parkinson.

"Then I entreat you to let me be their agent; his mother did not desert Mr. Mor-den when he lay on the bed of sickness, of death! and shall I refuse a like assistance to her son?"

Parkinson remained silent, still holding her hand in his.

"I am sure," said she, withdrawing her hand from his grasp, "you are too wise to urge the objection of that indelicacy which the world might impute to me."

"I am," returned he, "very conscious that false delicacy hath prevented the performance of many an act, both of friendship and duty; but, as the world will often blame merit, by putting on its deeds the worst construction, I know not whether I am authorized to suffer one under my protection to fall beneath its stigma, though it may be unjust."

"You know my real motive; I shall know it

it myself, and, with a heart like yours to applaud, to approve my conduct, the censure of the world cannot injure me."

Parkinson was about to reply, when Jacob Lamb entered the apartment, begging Parkinson and Rachel to compose themselves, for the surgeon had assured him, "he hoped Mr. Alfred would do very well," and, added Jacob, he begs he mayn't be disturbed by any body going into his room at present, for he has given him a sleeping draught, and will stay by him to see whether it takes effect.

Rachel immediately seated herself; and Parkinson asked Jacob to explain the cause of what had happened.

"I know you are angry with Mr. Alfred for having fought that Sir Flat," returned Jacob, "after all you said to him at Hilden on the subject; but, indeed, he could not do any other—he could not, indeed; flesh and blood could not bear the provocation that was given him: pray don't judge hardly of him, before you hear the story told."

"Do

“Do thou spare comments then,” said Parkinson, “and relate it.”

“I will ; but let me just go and listen at the chamber-door, to know whether the surgeon wants any thing first, and I’ll be back and tell you all about it in a minute.”

Parkinson nodded his head in compliance with Jacob’s proposal, and Jacob left the room, exclaiming as he went out, “Indeed you won’t blame him when you know all, for no mortal man could bear such usage.”

CHAP. IX.

A Touch of Quizzing.

WHEN Jacob Lamb returned to the parlour, he thus began : “ All is quiet, so now I can tell you about what has happened.—After that morning’s work at Hildden, which I am sure you can’t have forgot, Mr. Alfred saw no more of Sir Flat in the village, for he left it about an hour after, denouncing vengeance against both him and old Robson.—Nine or ten days after your departure, I can’t tell exactly which, passed on without any uneasiness, only that Mr. Alfred, for some good reason, I’ll be bound to say, which he chose to keep private, refused that puppy Cranberry admittance into my mistress’s house, and Miss Emily was always taking on about it, and declaring she had rather be shut up in a convent at once, than deprived of agreeable company; and, for my part, I could not but think it would be a good thing if she was, if she liked to have
such

such a fellow as that dangling about her, rather than the company that was in the house with her."

"Do not thou break thy story," said Parkinson.

Jacob understood the hint, and proceeded. — "On the tenth day, I think it was, after you left us, Miss Emily received a parcel by the coach from London; so when she opened it, it was a roll of prints, caricatures, as your would-be-wags call them; and in the middle of them was a slip of paper on which was written, that they were sent as a present to Miss Emily, to furnish her own and her friend's houses, who might like to have her intended husband's picture. — Well, sir, and shall I tell you what was on them?"

"Yes, do thou tell us," said Parkinson.

"You were drawn yourself," replied Jacob.

"They will not have drawn me as I am," returned Parkinson; "therefore I am curious to know how I am represented."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Jacob; "but I think you take the affront too coolly."

"Jacob,"

"Jacob," replied Parkinson, "dost thou believe me that the coolness, as thou dost call it, with which I do receive this weak attempt at insult, is the surest method of turning upon my slanderers the angry feelings with which they would inspire me."

Jacob hesitated an instant—then said, "Miss Rachel was not left out; the dastardly fellow had not man enough about him to forbear affronting a woman."

Again Rachel felt the contending passions of gratitude and displeasure rising within her heart, that Alfred had again risked his life for her; but resolute, if possible, not to betray her feelings, she begged Jacob, in as lively a tone as she could command, to let her know what had been said of her.

"There was not much said, miss," he returned, "the meaning was left to be guessed at.—In one corner of the picture, or print, or whatever you call it, there was an arbour, and in it a man dressed like a quaker, kissing a girl that was sitting by him, and her hand was put sily out behind her, and a young man was kissing that, unseen by the quaker.

—Now

—Now these figures were meant for you, and Miss Rachel, and Mr. Alfred; for at the bottom there was printed first an H, and after that a dash; and then an L and a D, and then another dash and an N, now that must mean Hillden, and then followed, "Heroes," at full length.

Parkinson smiled at Jacob's account, then asked, "Did this contemptible thing anger Alfred Eringham?"

"Could it do otherwise?" replied Jacob with all the warmth he would have felt if the affront had been offered to himself. "It was not so particularly what I have told you that enraged him though; in the background there was Mr. Alfred, drawn again, running away from a pistol on legs that was running after him, and a paper coming out of his mouth with, "Help! help!" written on it. Now could flesh and blood bear that, after what had happened?"

"Not with its views fixed solely on mortality," said Parkinson.

Rachel felt hurt, that Alfred had committed an action which drew so severe a reproof from

from Parkinson, and sighed out, "Poor Alfred! I pity him."

Parkinson turned to Jacob, and bade him proceed in his relation.

"Well, sir, Mr. Alfred and I came up to London, that very day, by the coach; Mr. Alfred was convinced that the prints must have come from Sir Flat, and been engraved by his order, and so he determined to call him to account for it.--Yesterday we arrived, and took up our abode at a coffee-house, from which Mr. Alfred wrote a letter to Sir Flat, challenging him to meet him this morning, on the accusation of his being the author of certain prints, which he sufficiently described.—My master received no answer from Sir Flat, and began to be doubtful whether Sir Flat would meet him on an affair of honour a second time, after what had passed at their first meeting. However, at the time fixed, we went to the appointed place, and found Sir Flat already there. He insisted on tossing up for the first fire: Mr. Alfred got it, but his pistol was fired without effect.

Sir

Sir Flat, of course, had the second shot, and you know the event of that."

"Sir Flat," remarked Parkinson, "hath here again the advantage over the open heart of Alfred—Dost thou think he would so readily have met a man, whom his own opinion of honour has already decided destitute of that quality, if he had not feared the process of law which he knew that man at liberty to open against him?"

"It was more than flesh and blood could bear," Jacob again repeated, and then left the room, not much better pleased by Parkinson's remarks on Alfred's conduct, than he before had been by Sir Flat's impertinence.

Rachel now began to express anxiety for the apprehensions, under which Mrs. Eringham must labour on account of her son, and requested permission of Parkinson to write her the most favourable account, with which it was allowable to flatter her.—Previously to her writing, however, she considered that it was necessary for her to know whether Mrs. Eringham had been acquainted with

Alfred's

Alfred's sudden journey to London, and she accordingly summoned Jacob back to inquire.

Jacob returned, and informed her that it was most probable Mrs. Eringham had surmised the reason, but that Alfred had even entered the London mail unknown to her, leaving a letter with Robson, to be delivered to her immediately after his departure, in which he had stated that business of the utmost importance, which he would explain to her on his return, called him to London for a few days.

When Jacob retired, Rachel consulted Jonathan Parkinson on what she should say to Mrs. Eringham relative to her son : he hesitated not a moment to advise the truth being laid before her, as, if they deceived her for the sake of her present comfort, they might only hereafter be reduced to the necessity of more deeply wounding her feelings if any thing fatal should occur to Alfred : Rachel, however, not less in flattery to her own hopes, than the feelings of his mother, softened, as much as possible, the fate of him she wrote of.

When

When the surgeon descended, he gave favourable hopes of his patient's speedy recovery; and Rachel, who had not yet sealed her letter, did not fail to add his opinion as her postscript: he, moreover, desired that Alfred might not be disturbed by the entrance of any person into his chamber, besides those who were absolutely requisite to attend upon him; and, particularly, that he should not be visited by any one whose appearance might agitate him.

Rachel heard in silence, and resolved to obey.

On the surgeon's departure, Parkinson left the room, and Rachel sat reflecting on a sentence Parkinson had a few minutes before uttered.—“How weak a creature is man, that his noblest resolutions can be overthrown by the ignoble ridicule of his fellow!”

But such is the frailty of human nature, that the sneer of a fool has more power to raise its feelings, than the admonitions of a wise man has to restrain them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A Vow ; and an Advertisement.

IN the course of the day, Mr. Pelf called upon Parkinson, and having been interrogated, by him, who was the person that had accompanied Blackman to the prison, on the morning on which he had taken away Rachel? and he having solemnly declared that the man was unknown to him, he departed.

Parkinson immediately sought Rachel, who had particularly requested not to see Pelf, and informed her of the want of success which attended his inquiry; after which he said, "Our business in this city is thus concluded."

"I cannot say that I think mine so," replied Rachel; "though I fear any attempt to discover poor Miss Darlington will be vain."

My search after the discovery of her abode hath been fruitless," returned Parkinson; "therefore I have not spoken to thee of it, but I have been using my endeavours to find her." To be silently grateful best pleased

Jonathan

Jonathan Parkinson ; thus Rachel did not answer.

Alfred slept, at intervals, during the night, with greater composure than had been expected, and his fever on the following morning was not violent :—he desired to see Parkinson, and the surgeon permitted his request.

Whilst Parkinson was in Alfred's chamber, Jacob Lamb stole down, on some contrived pretext, into the parlour to Rachel, who directly inquired of him after Alfred's health.

" Better, Miss Rachel, much better !" answered Jacob emphatically.

" I feared the surgeon flattered us," returned Rachel.

" The surgeon is but half his doctor," replied Jacob : " one sentence I told him did him more good than all the surgeon has done for him ; the knowing that you pitied him has been his best physic."

Rachel felt confused beyond all her endeavours to conceal her agitation ; the manner in which Jacob had uttered his last sentence seemed to declare, that a secret she
had

had thought buried in her own breast was publicly known.

"I hope you are not angry, Miss Rachel," continued Jacob, "that I told Mr. Alfred you said yesterday you pitied him?"

"I pity every one who is ill," replied Rachel hastily, hardly sensible what she said, and wishing rather to say anything herself than to give Jacob an opportunity of speaking.

Who has not, at times, felt a similar sensation?

"He would like dearly to see you," rejoined Jacob, "but the surgeon does not wish him to have any visitors yet."

"It is proper to wait his leave," said Rachel, in the same manner and tone in which she had spoken the former sentence she had uttered.

"I could hardly forbear telling the surgeon," Jacob again began, "how much good the sight of you would do Mr. Alfred."

"The wishes of people who are ill are often deceitful," answered Rachel; and, starting suddenly from her seat, left the room.

She immediately went to her chamber,

locked the door, and threw herself upon the bed ; a wretchedness she had never before felt equalled, came upon her.—Jacob's words had given her conviction of two truths, on which she could not bear to reflect ;—that Alfred Eringham loved her ; and that she could not bear that love hinted without discovering a disgraceful, a dishonourable emotion.—If the cause of our misery lies in ourselves, and we have not either the power or fortitude to remove it, every debate within our own minds, on the means we ought to pursue for destroying the ill, only gives it additional strength to torture us ; and thus harassed, to what extravagance do we not fly ? —Thus Rachel, too perplexed to be wise, and too fearful to be deliberate, fell on her knees, and breathed a solemn vow that forbade her ever to become the wife of Alfred Eringham. —Having bound herself by the strongest tie of religion, she felt comparatively happy and calm ; because every certainty is of a more serene nature, than the possibility of inclining to either of two opposed points.—But then followed reflection on the certainty she had just

just fixed to herself.—Doubts began to rise, which whispered that she might have placed an irremovable bar between herself and happiness.—Many possibilities now started up to view of her becoming the wife of Alfred, without impropriety to herself or him.—Half repentant, half decided on approving of what she had done, she traversed her chamber in a state of irresolute thought, that made her forget the world, till summoned to attend Parkinson at dinner.

He perceived her agitation, and inquired its cause ; she endeavoured to rally her feelings, and succeeded so far as to silence his questions, though not his surprise.

During the evening, Rachel with the utmost difficulty supported herself before Parkinson, and, on retiring to rest, she suffered her tears to relieve her heart from its stifled load of anguish.

The next morning Alfred's wound was dressed ; and, in consequence of the pain it occasioned him, his fever was higher than on the former day.

Rachel rose with a head-ache and flow
F 2 fever,

fever, which she determined, if she was able, to conceal; and wishing, as much as possible, to avoid the penetrating observation of Parkinson, she went down, after breakfast, into the public library.

She took up the newspaper of the day, and, after casting her eyes over several paragraphs, her wonder was not a little excited by an advertisement in nearly the following words.—
 “To the nobility and gentry.—A young lady, between nineteen and twenty years of age, who is persuaded, from many circumstances which she does not think it consistent to reveal in a public paper, that she is not the child of those who have hitherto passed for her parents, but the offspring of some person of real fashion; being extremely desirous of a restoration to her true relatives, entreats, that if any father or mother of the rank she has described, were ever deprived of a child whose age would be that above mentioned, and wish to see it restored to their parental care, from the cruel vicissitudes of life, that they would apply to Mrs. B—, at Haytown, —Shire, where the young lady in question now resides.”

Not-

Notwithstanding the lowness of her spirits, Rachel could not forbear exerting rather more than a smile, at the strange import of these lines, which she concluded to be the trick of a designing person, instigated by the hope of placing a daughter in some family to whom the loss of a child, as therein described, might have occurred.

She found herself unable to read long, or to fix her thoughts upon what she did peruse; thus returned to her apartment, and growing still more and more unwell towards the evening, she was obliged to confess herself ill, and retire to bed.

CHAP. XI.

News from Hillden.

THE two successive days Rachel continued so unwell, as to be obliged to keep her bed; on the third, she was sufficiently recovered to be able to sit up, but not to leave her chamber.—Alfred, whose health had before been rapidly improving, was now in a worse state than he had yet been; he had requested to see Rachel, and having been permitted by the surgeon to receive visitors, it was necessary to inform him of the reason that prevented her from visiting him:—this Jacob found means of imparting to Rachel, who having now argued herself into the resolution of believing that what she had done, had but been what it became her to do; and that, being once done, she had nothing farther to fear from the attentions of Alfred; as now to receive them, or even to notice that she understood them, would be to act in opposition to the strongest tie of duty; she promised to visit him on the following day.

In the afternoon, Parkinson came to Rachel's

chel's chamber, and informed her that Mrs. Eringham was arrived, and then with her son :—a few minutes after Jacob rapped at the door, and, having received leave of admission, announced his mistress; and Parkinson saying he would go and sit with Alfred, whilst Mrs. Eringham was with Rachel, left the chamber as she entered it.

Mrs. Eringham's spirits appeared much more depressed than Rachel had expected to find them, in consequence of the favourable account of her son, which Parkinson had two days before written to her; and particularly, as she herself declared that she had found Alfred recovered much beyond her expectations.

After half an hour's conversation had passed between them, Mrs. Eringham's restless agitation, so different to the usual placidity of her temper, induced Rachel to say—"Pardon my inquisitiveness, Madam, and answer me or not as you shall judge best :—I fear you have some further cause of anxiety than the one known to me?"

"It is anxiety on account of my son," she replied, "that makes me less cheerful than you have been accustomed to see me."

"But," said Rachel, "the surgeon declares him far removed from danger."

"It is not that I apprehend any thing from his wound."—She sighed, hesitated, then continued, "You have, I dare say, wondered that I did not arrive here before?"

Rachel acknowledged the truth of this supposition.

"I bring with me a piece of intelligence," rejoined Mrs. Eringham, "which I must very soon break to my son, lest he should hear it from any other tongue less tender than my own, in giving him the information; and particularly in his present weak state, I have much apprehension for the event, when he learns it:—she paused, then asked Rachel, "Have you heard from Emily Morden since you left Hilden?"

"No, I have not," answered Rachel.

"I thought she knew you too honourable to become the confidant of so unprincipled, so foolish an action."

"Good Heavens! Madam! what has she done?"

"Eloped with Mr. Cranberry."

Rachel trembled at every joint, and grew
red

red and pale by turns. Mrs. Eringham, whose thoughts were too much wrapped in what she was saying to perceive her emotion, thus went on :—" When I received your letter, informing me that Alfred had met Sir Flat, relative to the caricatures sent to Emily, I read it to her, without seeming moved by what had befallen him; she said, " Alfred is vastly fond of Rachel, to send two challenges in her behalf; in my opinion, there are other people it would better become him to be thinking about than Rachel."—I chid her for her unjust suspicion, and explained to her, that his own character had been attacked, and that he had fought in its defence :—she did not answer me, and I thought her convinced.—She left my house that very evening, at dusk, under pretence of walking to see her brother Eugene, was met by Cranberry at the end of the village, where a post-chaise was in waiting, which they both entered; and I have since heard nothing of her; only this account from Tom Smith, who saw them get into the chaise, and knew Cran-

berry, but did not immediately recognize Emily : this has delayed my coming hither, as I could not see my son without informing him of what was past ; and as I feared to give him the information, till all danger from his wound was removed."

Mrs. Eringham remained silent, and Rachel was too busy in thought to comment in speech on what she had just heard.

Their mutual reverie was broken by Mrs. Eringham, who said, " Advise me, my dear Rachel, how I shall make the necessary discovery to my son."

" Indeed you are the best judge," replied Rachel.

" Don't convert what I ask sincerely, into a compliment, by leaving the decision ultimately with me : do say something in the way of advice ; any one's opinion is so much preferable to our own, on a point which perplexes and distresses."

" If you were to write the account,"—stammered out Rachel.

" And send it to Alfred, do you mean ?"
asked

asked Mrs. Eringham, continuing the sentence which Rachel had left unfinished.

“ Yes.”

“ But, in that case, he will have no one with him to support him in the first shock.—I am so terrified, so apprehensive!—Oh, Rachel! he loved Emily the first moment he beheld her; conceive then, what the feelings of a man must be, who, placing his future happiness solely in the power of one woman, finds, at an unexpected moment, all his views subverted, and the rashness of that very woman—the cause!”

Rachel felt the cause applicable to herself; a stifling sickness came upon her, she leant forward to take the salts from the table, and, in the action, fell fainting from her chair.

Mrs. Eringham with some difficulty recovered her, and, when she saw her sufficiently revived, said, “ How are you thus agitated, Rachel?”

“ I have been some time unwell, and—”

Mrs. Eringham interrupted her—“ Your present illness, my love, I plainly perceive, is not bodily, but mental; fear not to open

your heart to me; you know you have my secrecy, and may command my consolation and assistance:—had Cranberry made the impression on your heart, which he vaunted himself to have done?”

“Cranberry? No, no, Madam! oh, no, no,” replied Rachel, with an emphasis that could not leave a suspicion of a doubt on the truth of what she had said.

Mrs. Eringham fixed her eyes in silence on Rachel; the glow of confusion overspread her cheek; and wiping away a tear with her handkerchief, whilst she hid with it her face, conscious of its treachery to her heart, she said, “Pray leave me, I am very melancholy company for you, whose spirits require to be enlivened; I will rally myself, and endeavour to be a better companion an hour hence:—I am weak from my late illness.”

“I fear I have talked with you too long,” replied Mrs. Eringham; “I was inconsiderate; you should have warned me:—adieu till by and by;” and she immediately left the chamber, inwardly convinced that Rachel’s emotion had betrayed a more than common interest

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ed
terest in the fate of her son ; and anxiously
desiring that he might consider her as the
substance of happiness, left him, for the sha-
dow that had passed away.

Mrs. Eringham's opinion of Emily Mor-
den and Rachel had originally been formed
from observations on their conduct and
words ; Alfred's on their vivacity and per-
sonal beauty ; in which latter Emily out-
shone Rachel, as the bold poppy does the
modest rose-bud to the eye of an observer
who decides at the first glance. Alfred had
privately swerved from his opinion, and
Mrs. Eringham had constrained herself to
behave towards Emily as the intended wife
of her son ; still Rachel had, in reality, pos-
sessed the greater regard of both, though
Alfred, from motives of delicacy towards
Emily, and Mrs. Eringham, from a similar
feeling towards her son, had always been
mutually silent on the subject.

CHAP. XII.

Food for Conjecture.

ON the first favourable opportunity, Mrs. Eringham imparted to her son the intelligence she had so much feared to discover to him, and her surprise was not a little excited to hear him exclaim, "Thank heaven! thank heaven!"

Conceiving his transport must be the effect of violent grief and anger combined, she besought him to be calm, and attend to reason.

"Impossible!" he cried, "my imagination presents to me too pleasing a prospect of happiness, for me to view it calmly; my bliss so far exceeds the bounds of reasonable expectation, that I cannot restrain my feelings:—Oh, madam! have you not perceived that my affections have wandered?—that I have seen the weakness of my first choice?—that I have discovered the mind of an angel in Rachel?"

"Alfred!"

“ Alfred !” exclaimed Mrs. Eringham,
“ are these indeed your real sentiments ?”

“ You cannot believe me,” he replied,
“ because I have endeavoured, nay perhaps
have succeeded in concealing them ; but
I am grateful to accident for its assistance in
a point where my own agency might have
been discreditable.—The world is not will-
ing to allow it possible for a lover to disco-
ver faults in his mistress ; and if they do be-
lieve it so, they think it a greater point of
honour for them to be reciprocally misera-
ble in marriage, than mutually happy in a
dissolution of engagements.”

“ You make me inconceivably happy in
this declaration,” returned Mrs. Eringham,
“ and if I feared not to drive you into too
great an ecstasy, I would venture to tell you—”

“ That Rachel thinks favourably of me !”
exclaimed Alfred, interrupting his mother—
“ Is it possible that I am so very fortunate ?”

“ I can only tell you, that she heard of
Emily’s elopement with a very visible emo-
tion.”

“ And when I first received my wound,”

replied Alfred, " she told Jacob that she pitied me."

" The letter also, which she wrote to me, explaining what had happened to you, was dictated by the nicest feelings, and tenderest anxiety for your welfare ; I thought it then only the effect of friendship towards me, as Emily had been so long your intended wife, and Cranberry so much talked of as the admirer of Rachel."

Alfred started : " And is it not possible," he cried, " that her interest in my fate, after I had received this wound, was merely friendship ? and her emotions on hearing the flight of Emily Morden, her knowledge of who was her companion ?—Discover this doubtful, this painful point, on which all my happiness depends, or you see me more wretched than I was in the idea of being Emily's husband."

" Then let your heart at rest ; my suspicions were the same as yours ; but Rachel has herself removed them, by declaring Cranberry an object of perfect indifference to her."

" Then

"Then I am happy again ; the composition of Rachel is too pure for her heart and tongue to falsify each other. I have not seen her since my rencontre with Sir Flat, but she has promised to visit me to-morrow morning."

"Let me entreat you to conduct yourself with discretion, whatever your future intentions may be, and how much soever you may have reason to suppose she regards you with partiality ; yet there is a delicacy arising from the peculiarity of both your situations, which requires, for the present, that you should confine yourself to polite attentions, which I need not instruct one of your feelings how to mark, without rendering them offensive by their being overstrained."

"I see the necessity of complying with the pleasing difficulty," replied Alfred smiling.

The surgeon now entered the apartment, and Alfred inquired when he might be allowed to travel ; to which demand he received in answer, that if the favourable symptoms which now attended his wound continued to increase, he might in a week
set

set out on his journey to Hildden without danger. This assurance was not a little satisfactory to Alfred, as he felt an unaccountable superstitious pleasure and security in the attempt of winning Rachel's heart, amidst those scenes where they had together passed so many happy days.

Rachel performed her promise of visiting Alfred; and to her great satisfaction, Mrs. Eringham and Jonathan Parkinson being both present, general subjects only were the topics of their discourse.

Two days after the arrival of Mrs. Eringham, Sir Gilbert came on a morning visit to Rachel, who, being now sufficiently recovered in health (her feelings she exerted strength to conceal) to leave her chamber, happened, when he was announced, to be alone in the dining-room; and thus it became her task to give him the heads of the affair between Sir Flat and Alfred, and its consequence, of which event he as yet knew nothing.

Parkinson in a few minutes joined them, and Sir Gilbert then said "that he was come to propose a scheme to them, for their all
going

going down into the country together. He was going to Fairford; and if they would fix on the time, as a week or two sooner or later was of no consequence to him, he would take them to Hilden in his coach, by which means they might have the pleasure of one another's company; for he thought travelling was always mighty dull without somebody to talk to."

Parkinson received his offer with the good humour in which it had been conveyed; but judging it more prudent to evade it, lest the baronet should renew his hopes of Rachel; if she accepted from him any civility of so public a nature, he replied, that he had promised to travel in company with Mrs. Eringham and her son, and consequently must adhere to his engagement.

Sir Gilbert then inquired when they intended setting out; and Parkinson having told him that they expected Alfred would be able to travel in the beginning of the following week, the baronet said he thought he should be in the country himself in less than a fortnight, and added, "that he hoped they would

would often come and see him, for he was a lone man as they knew, but he hoped he should not live out the year so. Time made vast alterations, and he promised them he was on the sharp look-out for a wife."

"I wish you success in the attainment of your wish, sir," said Rachel.

"And I happiness after thou hast attained it," added Parkinson.

Sir Gilbert conceived the words literally, and answered, "Thank you, Mr. Parkinson; thank you; I hope I shall be happy, and try the experiment I will. I am not like some of your old men that say, Oh, I shall marry by-and-bye; and by-and-bye never comes at all: like the old sign-post they talk of, with "Come here to-morrow, and you shall have ale for nothing," upon it, and to-morrow never comes. I say to-day, to-day, and I'll stick to my saying; and so good morning to you, and good bye to you, Miss Rachel, till we meet at Hilden."

In the evening, the representation of one of Shakespeare's most esteemed pieces induced Parkinson to visit the theatre. He
invited

invited Mrs. Eringham and Rachel to be of the party; but they excused themselves, and passed the hours in Alfred's chamber. Rachel knew him to be fond of piquet, and proposed the game: he readily agreed to her proposition, and used his arm for the first time, and with little pain. Alfred was all love, Rachel all friendship. Alfred had determined not to speak on the subject nearest to his heart, and obeyed the resolution propriety had taught him to form;—but his thoughts could admit no other subject: thus all he spoke was of his game, and answers to questions proposed to him by his mother and Rachel; yet all his actions, and the few words he did utter, evidently resulted from a heart overflowing with happiness.

Parkinson had said that he should not stay to see the after-piece, but return home immediately after the play, and Mrs. Eringham and Rachel had promised to wait supper for him. Accordingly, when Alfred, to whom an early hour was recommended, was about to retire to bed, they descended into the dining-room: eleven o'clock came, and, to their surprise,

surprise, Parkinson was not returned : they concluded, though it was very rarely the case with him, that he might have changed his resolution with regard to his time of leaving the theatre. Twelve o'clock struck, and they now every minute expected to see him enter the room ; but he came not. Rachel grew alarmed, so did Mrs. Eringham ; but she endeavoured to hide her anxiety, and support the spirits of Rachel. One o'clock sounded, and, unpromising as the plan appeared, Rachel rang the bell, in order to send Jacob to the theatre in search of him. The door opened, and, instead of Jacob, appeared Parkinson himself.

“ Parkinson ! ” cried Rachel, “ I am very glad you are come home, it is so late.”

“ Yes, it is late,” he answered.

“ We have been quite alarmed,” said Mrs. Eringham, “ lest any accident should have happened to you.”

“ It is later even than I did imagine,” Parkinson replied, looking at his watch.— “ Why did ye wait supper for me ? ” he added, seeing the cloth spread, and no appearance of the table having been used.

“ You

"You said you should come home after the play," answered Rachel.

"Yes, I did say I should," returned Parkinson, forcing a smile.

"But you changed your mind," said Mrs. Eringham; "and if you were entertained, all is well, since you are safe at home at last."

No reply was made, and they sat down to table.

Parkinson ate little, and the anxious eye of Rachel beheld him visibly discomposed. —Mrs. Eringham asked some questions relative to the evening's amusement, and Parkinson merely answered to them without rejoining in the conversation.

Immediately on the cloth being removed, the ladies retired to their chambers; Rachel perplexed to discover a cause for Parkinson's late return and agitation; and yet not considering herself authorised to ask an explanation of circumstances, in which she felt interest, only from her wish to see him to whom they related happy.

When they met at breakfast, Parkinson addressed Mrs. Eringham by saying, "Was
the

the surgeon here yesterday in the evening after I did go out ?”

She answered in the affirmative.

“ Did he still think that Alfred would be able to travel on Tuesday next ?”

“ He thought it beyond all doubt that he would.”

“ This is Saturday. We have then yet three days to pass in this city, and I have some unforeseen business to transact, which requireth my presence: thus I shall, perhaps, be from home all, or the greater part of, this day. Do not let my absence delay your meals: this is the reason for which I do mention, that it is uncertain when I shall return.”

“ Is your business in the city ?” Rachel ventured to ask, hoping she might learn something to lessen her anxiety on Parkinson’s account, which she could not subdue, though she could not account to herself why she entertained it.

“ It is with many different people,” he answered, “ and consequently dispersed about.” He rose, took up his hat and stick, and, bidding them farewel, left the room.

In the evening he returned apparently more composed; at least the serenity of his countenance defied even the scrutinizing eye of Rachel to pronounce that his heart was ill at rest.

On the Sunday he walked with Mrs. Eringham and Rachel in the Park, and left them only to pay a farewell visit to Sir Gilbert.

The day previous to their departure being arrived, Parkinson went out in the morning to conclude, as he told them, the business which had called him from them the whole of the Saturday; and whilst Mrs. Eringham was packing up, Rachel was left alone with Alfred, who had moved into the dining-room, as a preparatory step to the commencement of his journey on the following day.

They had not been many minutes together before the newspaper was brought to Alfred. On receiving it he said, "Now for the news: I suppose we shall find—Married at Gretna-Green, Edward Cranberry, Esq. to Miss Emily Morden. What do you think of it?"

“ That I hope they may be happy,” answered Rachel.

“ You think the hazard they run in each other, then, deserves a reward for its boldness ?”

“ I think it a great hazard, whether those whose dispositions are changeable meet happiness in any plan they embrace.”

Alfred felt a momentary confusion, then said, “ Second thoughts are best, according to the proverb.”

“ Have you faith in old sayings ?” asked Rachel.

“ The triteness of a moral,” replied Alfred, “ is, in my opinion, a proof of its truth.”

“ But fact often contradicts those old lessons.”

“ Why, then, we can only say, that fact and proverbs have family-disputes, for fact is undoubtedly their father.”

“ I don’t dispute their affinity, only I won’t allow an elder son to have his nose put out of joint by the child you have adopted.”

“ I stick to—Second thoughts are best ; what do you pit against him ?”

“ Look

“ Look before you leap.”

Alfred did not feel himself able to parry this blow without beginning an explanation, for which he was neither fully prepared, nor thought himself quite right at that moment to do ; and thus avoided farther discourse, by reading the paper aloud.

CHAP. XIII.

An Enigma.

AT the appointed hour they left London. Parkinson rode with Alfred the first stage ; which having seen him bear much better than he expected, he requested to have Rachel for his companion during the second ; and, of course, Mrs. Eringham took his place.

On being alone with Rachel, he thus addressed her : “ Rachel, thou must have perceived that my mind hath, for the last few days, been occupied on an affair which I have not explained to thee : I am not now going to tell thee what it is ; only, as I do think that thou feelest interest in my happiness, I will say to thee thus much for thy quiet’s sake : Thou needest not to be under trouble on my account ; do not thou question me, but set thou thy heart at rest.”

This address was so unexpected, that Rachel

chel remained silent, because she knew not how to answer it.

Parkinson continued thus: "I do return now to Hillden only for a day and two nights, to give some orders relative to the management of my affairs at home to Eugene Morden; I shall then leave thee for some time, most probably for two months, in the course of which thou wilt not hear from me."

"For so long a time?" said Rachel, hardly knowing what she uttered.

"It may be for twice that time;—it is possible even that I may be absent the half of a year."

Rachel sighed.

"Ever since the death of Charles Morden," Parkinson went on, "I have considered thee as solely mine; do thou tell me then, ere we part, what it is in my power to do for thee towards constituting thy happiness in my absence from Hillden. Where wilt thou best like to reside? in the house of the widow Eringham?"

"Her son is an objection to it in the eye of the world."

"There is the same objection to thy making my house thy abode. Shall I furnish for thee, with the moveables of my house, any cottage in the village?"

"No," replied Rachel; "my choice, if you do not object to it, is, to hire the two rooms which Tom Smith lets as lodgings. I shall there be well attended to; they will be my own, and enough for me."

"Thou shalt have them."

Parkinson then pressed Rachel to accept some bank-notes; but she declined his offer, having the legacy left her by Mr. Morden still untouched.

Parkinson afterwards remained silent, or spoke only at intervals on indifferent subjects; and Rachel, forbidden to question, could only have recourse to thought, which refused to furnish any solution of the riddle with which Parkinson had presented her.

Where they dined, Parkinson mentioned, in general terms, his intended absence from Hillden, and Mrs. Eringham immediately invited Rachel to pass the time in her house; to which request Parkinson, fortunately for Rachel,

Rachel, answering that Mrs. Smith's had been determined upon as her abode, the invitation was not repeated.

On the Wednesday evening they arrived in Hildden, Alfred very little fatigued by the journey. Rachel passed the night at Parkinson's; and immediate information of her intention having been given to Mrs. Smith, the rooms were prepared for her reception, and she took possession of them on the succeeding afternoon.

Eugene attended her home, and their conversation turned upon Parkinson's departure; of which Eugene made extremely light, saying, that he possessed estates to a considerable amount in Yorkshire, the rents of which he had often much difficulty in collecting, and supposed that he was, of course, going thither, though he might have some reason for concealing his intention.

Having bade Rachel farewell, and, which was not usual with him, embraced her at parting, Jonathan Parkinson left Hildden on the following day in the London mail.

The window of Rachel's apartment front-

ed the church-yard; and as she looked towards it, she perceived that a plain stone, specifying the age of Mr. Morden, and the day of his death, had been raised at one end of the grave:—Here lay Virtue, without a line to speak its fame!—She could not but contrast it in her mind with the grave of Vice decked with a false eulogium!—" 'Tis not on earth our real worth," she cried, " that gives us fame when we are gone, but our ability to purchase others into writing it. The bishop, the dean, and the rector, too often buy monumental fame in barter for those benefices which they call free gifts; and when their lives have been passed in discontented traffic, to increase the good things they already so bountifully enjoyed, they die with every virtue cut upon their monumental stone; while as often the poor curate, who has only taught his flock the way to heaven, dies without a single word of praise, because he'd nought to give but hopes of bliss eternal."

CHAP. XIV.

*Wherein a Girl of Eighteen contrives to
amuse her Hours without Scandal.*

A WEEK elapsed after the departure of Parkinson without any material occurrence, except that Rachel saw Alfred flattering himself that he was making rapid advances towards her heart, whilst she felt miserable in his giving her no opportunity of contradicting his hopes.

It was one evening, about this time, that Eugene, coming to visit Rachel, as he frequently did, said, on entering, "I have just received a letter from Jonathan Parkinson."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Rachel eagerly; "what are its contents?"

"All relative to his estate here in Hill-den; except that he says it is the only one I shall receive from him before his return home; and requesting me, in a postscript, to tell you, that a Miss Darlington has received his assistance to pass over to a convent in Flanders."

"Kind, generous man!" cried Rachel. "She and her distresses have then occupied a part of his thoughts, amidst his own concerns; and he has become the friend to her I had pledged myself to be."

Eugene inquired who Miss Darlington was, and she explained it to him.

Mrs. Eringham coming into the apartment before Eugene left it, was informed by him of the welfare of Parkinson. She then said, "A friend of mine, in the law department, writes me from London, that Jonathan Parkinson has taken his passage on board an American ship, and is going in pursuit of Blackman; at least, by the description my friend gives of the person, the hope of finding whom instigates him to the voyage, I think it can be no other."

"And all this on my account," exclaimed Rachel, "who am nothing to him but a dependant, forced upon his bounty by chance! I cannot suffer him to undergo the fatigue, if my prayers can dissuade him from it. For heaven's sake, Eugene, tell me his address in London, that I may write to him before it

is

is too late, and try if my entreaties can persuade him to relinquish this idea !”

“ He refused to let me know it,” returned Eugene, “ and expressly told me that he should not be in his usual lodgings.”

“ Heaven reward him, and grant him the substance of my prayers for him !” said Rachel.

The hour was late, and Mrs. Eringham, who had called upon Rachel merely to give her the intelligence which had that day reached her, soon returned home, as did Eugene; and Rachel, left alone, had recourse to her pen, to divert her thoughts from dwelling too forcibly on subjects of melancholy regret, and wrote the following tale:

THE SORCERESS.

A beauteous maid, of rustic birth,

Calista was her name,

In lute and song had learnt t'excel,

And gain'd a modest fame.

Amidst the village maids so fair,

All hail'd Calista queen

Of their Arcadian sports, and wiles,

Held nightly on the green :

For when the dance, with mazy twine,
 The youths and maids had led,
 To please them with her voice, and hand,
 The fair Calista sped.

And though, by turns, the dance to lead,
 The youths obtain'd her hand,
 Damon alone her glowing heart
 To breathe love's flame had fann'd.

Of art and guile they nothing knew,
 The maid her love confess'd;
 And, gazing on Calista's charms,
 The youth was all but blest,

But here, in life, there's nothing true,
 Nothing undone secure;
 A sudden shade may black the flame
 That burns most chaste and pure.

Within the village where they dwelt,
 A sorceress held her court;
 And friendly hitherto she'd been,
 Using her art in sport.

But love, that disappointment fears,
 Soon makes a friend a foe;
 And whence we blessings most expect,
 Derives us only woe.

Romilla long had study'd love,
 And, with her heart at rest,

She laugh'd the passion into scorn—
 " 'Twas children's play at best."

Yet,

Yet, ah! she found, in spite of art,
 That love could reason sway;
 The god into her heart had crept,
 And open'd passion's way.

Her throbbing breast began to fill,
 And gasp with thirst of air;
 She search'd the cause, and soon she found
 Unconscious Damon there.

'Twixt right and love a contest strong
 Within that breast was held;
 But soon victorious Love was left
 The master of the field.

And knowing art alone could give
 Lov'd Damon to her arms,
 She took a form of humble guise,
 But put on Circe's charms.

She hid her next unto the spot
 Where Damon fed his flock;
 And laid her down beside a fount
 That sprang from out the rock.

Hither, at noon, to drink the stream,
 His goats did Damon bring;
 And found disguis'd Remilla there,
 Nigh fainting by the spring.

"Oh, gentle shepherd!" soft she cry'd;
 "Lend me thy timely aid;
 Fatigue and hunger do conspire
 To cloud me with death's shade."

He brought her water in his cup,
And rais'd it to her head;
He op'd the wallet by his side,
And gave her of his bread.

She thank'd him in a tone of plaint,
And rais'd her from the ground;
"Alas!" then said, "now canst thou tell
Where labour may be found?"

"For I must seek it; hard my lot!
Nor friend, nor love, have I;
And if I fail to gain employ,
In poverty I die."

From off her cheek the syren tears
She then did seem to wipe;
While Damon gaz'd, and felt his heart,
In pity's virtue, ripe.

"Come thou with me, fair maid," he said,
"And I will take thee where,
Till thou canst find a flock to tend,
A maid shall give thee care."

"Ah! thanks are poor, and wishes nought,
Return'd for gen'rous deeds;
Yet take my servant pray'rs," she cry'd,
"To him who virtue speeds."

To fair Calista's cot they go;
And find the maid alone;
When Damon tells the stranger's tale,
And asks Calista's boon;

To let her there that night repose,
And give her tender care :
Calista hears, and pities one
So wretched, and so fair.

The morn successive, ev'ry shrub
And ev'ry flow'r bloom'd gay ;
While whistling birds proclaim'd, with joy,
Calista's wedding-day.

Within a sacred bow'r was rais'd,
Upon a hallow'd ground,
By virgins' hands, an altar bright,
With thyme and roses bound.

Thither the youth with rapt'rous smiles
Led the consenting maid ;
And there the knot of love was ty'd,
And Hymen's homage paid.

The day in festive sports was pass'd,
In innocence and bliss,
By all but Romilla ; her laugh
Conceal'd the serpent's hiss.

And when, at night, the dance was o'er,
Calista's form she took,
And gave the maid, in Damon's eyes,
The shape she had forsook.

Now Damon eager snatch'd her hand,
And to his cottage led ;
Romilla each care's return'd,
O'erjoy'd her arts had sped.

But

But scarce the door had Damon clos'd,
When, swift, Calista came;
And thus in frantic terms upbraids
Her cheated lover's shame :

" Ah, Damon ! cruel, art thou false ?
Dost thou Calista scorn ?
Was it for this thou brought'st *her* here ?
Why was I ever born ?

" Oh ! couldst thou not have gone from hence ?
This mockery have spar'd ?
Have told me that I was thy hate ?
Then with another pair'd ?

" 'Tis a sad triumph thus to tear
A too fond woman's breast ;
Oh, stab me ! drown me ! from thy hand
In pity give me rest."

When Damon heard a voice thus speak,
He turn'd around to view
Her whom he held : Calista saw,
Nor thought his sense untrue.

" 'Tis but the voice of one in sport,"
Romilla quick did say ;
" And, hark ! it now has ceas'd again,
The speaker's gone away."

The heedless Damon gave no thought,
Save to Calista's charms ;
And sunk, deluded by her arts,
Into Romilla's arms.

But

But when the sun began his course,
 And wak'd him with his ray,
 Calista was not by his side,
 Alone young Damon lay.

He rush'd to find her; when, sad tale!
 Without the cottage door
 Calista lay, asleep in death,
 Her pangs and pleasures o'er.

A phrensy seiz'd his fever'd brain,
 Distractedly he flew;
 And from the rock, above the brook,
 His hated life he threw.

One grave contains them; and their hearts
 Now meet beneath one stone;
 Beside the which Romilla sits
 At eve, and makes her moan—

Her constant and repentant moan,
 For love's ungovern'd sway;
 Cursing a life, she cannot end,
 More bitterly each day.

CHAP. XV.

Love, Honour, and Obedience.

WHEN Mrs. Eringham and Alfred called upon Rachel, as was usual with them, on the following day, she showed them her little performance. Mrs. Eringham declared herself pleased with it, and Alfred was in raptures before he had scarcely looked over a stanza.

“ I expected these compliments,” said Rachel, “ but I am not flattered by them; I think those mistaken, who extol performances they see through the medium of friendship, and which the world at large, viewing through that of indifference, would despise.”

“ You are right in your fact, but not in your argument,” replied Alfred : “ friendship extols the works of those it regards, because it sees them with a sympathetic pleasure; the world condemns, because it envies.”

“ I am

"I am glad you have turned the subject from me," cried Rachel smiling.

"How have I done that?" asked Alfred.

"By the introduction of envy," she returned. "I feel myself of too little consequence for that to apply to me; and, the subject being become general, I shall enjoy a debate."

"And I shan't be able to say one word towards keeping it up. I have lost all the interest I felt in it, now you have barred partiality." He took the paper in his hand, and, having read in it some moments, said, "Now I look at it again, I am very much inclined to quarrel with it. True love deserves the only reward it values, and with you it meets punishment."

"It shews the invalidity of human expectations."

"In Arcadia," replied Alfred with emphasis.

"It is a truth in every country," answered Rachel.

"The next time you write," exclaimed Alfred,

Alfred, "draw your subject from experience, and your tale will have a happier conclusion."

"No," replied Rachel smiling, "I have done writing, it is your turn now."

"The muse that bids me write must inspire me then," said he.

"Your hesitation to acquiesce is no great compliment to her powers," observed Mrs. Eringham.

"Immediate compliance then shall seal my pardon."—He moved to the table on which the inkstand stood, and placed himself before it.

"While you are poetising," said Mrs. Eringham, "I shall go and transact some business in the village. I expect something very fine at my return." She left the room.

"Oh, muse, to whom my vows are paid," Alfred began, fixing his eyes on Rachel, and stopping when he had finished the line.

"Proceed," she said.

"Oh Rachel!" returned Alfred, and sighed.

"Does the muse refuse inspiration?"

"No;

“No; she gives it to a degree that suspends every faculty but admiration.” Herose, and took her hand.—“Oh, Rachel, is the confession of my tongue requisite to tell you, that my heart is yours alone, and ever?”

Rachel had foreseen the declaration she had to expect; and having kept herself prepared to meet it, she retained her composure with comparative firmness, but could not reply.

“Happiest of moments!” Alfred continued, “when Emily gave me the means of declaring, with honour to myself, in the eye of the world, that Rachel was the woman who alone possessed my affections, and whom alone I should glory to call mine!”

“In friendship ever,” she replied, “never yours in——” ‘love,’ she would have said; the word died on her tongue, and she repeated, with emphasis, “never, never!”

Alfred heard, and his countenance underwent so sudden and striking a change, from hope and pleasure, to surprise and misery, that Rachel trembled for the event of the declaration, which she now blamed herself for having so rashly made.

“God

“ God of heaven !” exclaimed Alfred, after a momentary pause of astonishment, “ were those the words of Rachel ?—Oh, tell me that my senses deceived me !”

“ Why this surprise ?” asked Rachel, endeavouring to speak collectedly.

“ Oh, Rachel, have I not long since told you my opinion of Emily, my determination of not connecting my fate with hers ?”

“ Yes; but was I from thence to infer, that you had formed a wish to unite it with mine ?”

“ Did not my eyes speak the ecstatic hope ?”

“ Did mine ever favour the expectation ?”

“ I have so much wished your inclinations to meet mine, that I have often flattered myself they did.”

“ I am glad, then, to have this opportunity given me, for requesting of you that those hopes may cease, as they never will be realized.”

“ You detest me, then; and justly, for my blindness in having hitherto overlooked you for an unworthier object.—What greater proof of my contriteness can I offer, than to acknowledge I have sinned against perfection, and repent my crime ?”

“ To

“ To say nothing of the possibility of a second repentance, there is one obstacle beyond my power to remove, which forbids our union.”

“ Then you despise me ?”

“ Why this inference ?”

“ Because there is no obstacle insurmountable to love.”

“ Could you place faith in a woman who should violate a duty in giving you her hand ?”

Alfred hesitated a moment ; but his argument must be supported, or his cause lost, and he answered, “ Who but can applaud the woman he loves, for acting towards the promotion of his happiness ?”

“ You once asked me, if it were possible for a man to be happy in a woman without a mind :—Do you recollect the question ?”

“ I do.”

Rachel went to a drawer, and took from it the letter of the late Mr. Morden, which contained the injunction laid on her by her parents not to marry ; she put it into Alfred's hand, and desired him to read it :—when she perceived him to have concluded it, she said,

“ Will

“Will you now think so ill of me as to ask my hand, when the very act of giving it to you must render me an object of contempt in your eyes?—You have repented one engagement, because you discovered the woman, who was bound in it with you, to be without a mind; that mind, which I shall call a small portion of common sense, you tell me you imagine me to possess, by the offer you have just made me; and on the presumption of my possessing it, you have made that offer;—can you then desire me to lose my own good opinion, and the very quality for which you profess to esteem me, in the very moment I ought the more highly to prize it, as a hold upon your esteem?—Reflect, and you cannot wish to couple such contradictions.”

“Unfeeling monsters!” exclaimed Alfred, “they cast you desolate upon the world, and forbid you a protector; but they cannot deny you the sympathy of another’s heart, however they may steel their own into forgetting you.”

“Alfred,” said Rachel with emotion, “if my parents seem guilty, they may not be so; and though I have never known them, I feel

an

an inward impulse that forbids me to listen to any aspersion thrown on them."

"I beg your pardon," cried Alfred; "if I have caused you a momentary feeling the reverse of happiness, impute it to my earnest desire of your welfare."

"If you really desire it, never speak again to me on the subject we have now been discussing."

"I cannot dismiss it, without your answer to one question I shall propose:—Can I be your brother?"

"Can I prove that you are not?" replied Rachel.

"You evade my question; you do not answer it.—I can prove that you are not my sister; my mother never had any child but myself, and she is here to assert the truth in my behalf."

"The injunction made to me leaves me open no casualties for its evasion."

"Oh, Rachel!" exclaimed Alfred, "I have felt despair; but I never knew how keen the sting of settled misery is, till now."

—He clasped his hands, and rushed from the apartment.

Rachel's heart was eased from a load, of which she had long wished to unburden it, and thus far she was comparatively happy ; but feelings of a tenderer nature than the cold command of honour, which had supported her through the foregoing scene, followed, and, unable to suppress her tears, she ran to hide them in her chamber.

When sufficiently recovered to return to the parlour, she met Mrs. Eringham in the passage, and they together entered the room. —“ The poet's gone, I see,” said Mrs. Eringham, “ but I must have a peep at the verses ; are these them ?” and, as she spoke, she took from the table the letter which still lay open upon it.

“ Oh, no,” said Rachel hastily, “ that is—”

Mrs. Eringham laid it down again.

A momentary silence ensued ; Rachel reddened, then said, “ You may read it—I wish you to read it, as you will, doubtless,
hear

hear its contents ; but pray, madam, spare all comments."

Rachel turned to the window ; Mrs. Eringham read, and felt as a mother, then said, " Has Alfred seen— ?" she hesitated.

" Yes," answered Rachel, scarcely able to articulate through her suppressed tears ; and, snatching up the letter, ran again to her chamber to give vent to the overflowings of her heart.

Mrs. Eringham did not attempt to follow her, but returned home, wishing, yet fearing, to meet Alfred.

CHAP. XVI.

The Effect of knowing Books, without knowing Men.

WHEN Mrs. Eringham called again upon Rachel, which she did not do till the second day after her last visit, they met, as might be expected, with emotion on both sides; but Mrs. Eringham perceived Rachel settled into a composure, which she considered not at all in favour of the petition she meant to urge.

Rachel, resolute in sustaining the part she had marked out for herself to act, inquired for Alfred with all the firmness she could command.

“ Too unhappy to be well,” replied Mrs. Eringham.

“ Was he too unwell to walk with you ?”

“ Do you think he can so soon forget — ?” said Mrs. Eringham, and stopped.

“ I think he has very soon forgotten his wonted visits of friendship,” returned Rachel.

“ You know not the struggle of subduing feelings like his.”

Rachel

Rachel sighed ; Mrs. Eringham continued : “ He declares he never can bring himself to see you, unless you will make him one promise :—My dear Rachel, let me entreat you to reflect on what he asks, to endeavour to grant his prayer ;—your refusal will drive him to agony—to madness :—promise to be his when you have discovered your parents, and their search will become his immediate business.”

“No, madam, the promise cannot be made; for, if made, it will never be performed.”

“ Then it is death to Alfred to see you.”

“ I hope, when the possibility of seeing me ends, time may wean his regards from me.—I shall, in a very short time, leave this kingdom.”

“ What do you mean, Rachel ?”

“ To go into a convent in Flanders till my parents shall claim me ; at all events, till Jonathan Parkinson shall return to England.”

“ For heaven’s sake, do not think of this plan !”

“ I have decided from reflection, and shall not easily change my intention.”

“ Let me entreat you to reflect again;—do not make me the bearer of these tidings to Alfred.”

“ As he has determined not to see me, you can easily conceal my intention from him till I am gone.”

“ Is this your wish, Rachel ?”

“ My wish is for happiness, as far as I can promote it without an infringement on my own duty.”

“ You cannot hate him, then ?”

“ Certainly not; I esteem him.”

“ Then what forbids you to make the promise, on which his misery or happiness depends ?”

“ I am not bound to explain my reason, but be assured that I have one.”

Mrs. Eringham shortly after departed, not much less unhappy than her son, and blaming herself for having been the first to raise his hope into expectation, of obtaining Rachel's hand.

Eugene frequently visited Rachel, and heard, of course, from her, the transactions of the foregoing days ; but, not supposing

Alfred

Alfred to be the man for whom she had formerly declared to him she entertained a prepossession, he did not renew his own suit, though he heard, with rather a selfish pleasure, her intention of secluding herself for a while from the world.

One evening, as they were walking together in the village, as they passed the Rose and Crown, a post-chaise stopped before it, and from it alighted Mrs. Hutchinbunck.

Eugene immediately went up to her, and addressed her by name; Mrs. Hutchinbunck poured forth a volley of condolence on the death of his father; and then turning to Rachel, said, "If I am not mistaken, miss, you are the young lady that was in the coach with me, when that man behaved so unmannerly with his pig.—How do you do, miss?"

"I hope you are well, madam?" returned Rachel; "I must apologize for not recollecting you when we travelled together."

"Why, pray, miss, begging pardon for my bad memory, where did we ever meet before?"

" You have seen Rachel Ellis at my father's," said Eugene.

" Lord bless me ! and are you the little girl that was, that I always thought so clever, for asking me whether I was sea-sick in coming from Holland ?"

Rachel smiled in the affirmative.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck then asked for John and Emily ; to which questions evasive answers having been given, she requested them to step into the inn with her, " for she had a tale to tell them about Richard that would make their hair stand on end."

They followed her into a room, and she thus began :—" That chaise now brought me from my cousin Barnaby's, where, you know, I said I was going for six weeks on a visit : well, and what do you think is the reason I am come away already ?—why, when we first went to the village where my cousin lives, he had let one of his barns to a set of strolling players ; so, of course, we all went to the play the first night I arrived at my cousin's, which happened to be the last of their performing, and Richard, who had never before seen any
acting,

acting, came home more like one distracted than a person in his proper senses——”

“ From what cause, ma’am ? ” asked Rachel ; from whom Mrs. Hutchinbanck seemed to demand the question, by pausing, and fixing her eyes upon her.

“ That’s the very question I asked him myself ; and what do you think he answered me ?—The fire of eloquence, that burnt up his tongue—or something very like it ; and after that nothing would satisfy him but speaking speeches out of play-books, and stamping about in the barn where he had seen the play ;—and now, Mr. Morden (turning to Eugene), would you believe it, he has actually run away from me, without so much said as with your leave, or by your leave, and joined himself with a set of strollers ; and what’s more, I should never have known what’s become of him, if he had not had the audacity to write me this letter, which I received from him yesterday.”

Eugene took the letter from her hand, and read it aloud, as she requested—“ Honoured parent ! As the canvas receives animation

from the skilful finger of the artist, so do the words of the poet from the tongue of their speaker:—The excellence of the painter will speak for itself; that of the poet is not so obvious to lesser minds, unless elucidated by an emphatic pronunciation resulting from a discerning mind.—To serve in this just cause of those deceased poets, for whom Fame will never cease to blow her brazen trump, I leave you; that as far as the Gods have willed me powers, I may tend to enlighten whatever passages in them may be obscure by my well emphasizell diction.—You, who, I fear (pardon my supposition), have not been so liberally gifted with the ability for comprehending this my argument, as myself (for which I am becomingly thankful), who advance it, may, perhaps, regret the entrance of this great idea into my thoughts; I can only lament the tardy foot with which it hath advanced into my seat of knowledge:—It was the blasphemy uttered against our immortal bard, by him who professed to speak the Thane of Cawdor, in the barn of your cousin, which impelled me to give him the justice

justice required from an auditor less criminally disposed to his memory.—I could here explain to you the passages in which he sinned, but that I fear you would not read my explanations with the ardour I should write them; let me then content myself with adding, that I hope time or accident will never cause you to disbelieve that I am your dutiful and affectionate son,

“ Richard Hutchinbunck.”

“ P. S. Please to direct for me by my own name, at the theatre, Haytown, ——shire.”

“ Well, Mr. Morden, what do you think ?” cried Mrs. Hutchinbunck when Eugene had concluded the letter.

“ This letter,” he replied, “ does not surprise me so much as it does you ; it is evidently a composition not unnatural to a man who has acquired knowledge from study, and who has never looked into the world to convince himself what part of that knowledge ought to be reduced into practice.”

“ I’m sure he has heard me say enough about keeping up to one’s station, for him to have known it must be a disgrace to him to turn player ;—but his frolic is just over, I

shall be with him in a day or two, and I'll open his eyes by a rod through his ears, I warrant him.—I shall take him to Holland with me," continued she, after a short pause; "I shall never dare to leave him in England when I am out of it, for fear he should return to his tricks."

"Are you going back to Holland, ma'am?" asked Rachel.

"Oh yes, miss, I am going back directly, as soon as I have found that ungracious boy.—My poor dead husband left several weighty concerns in the hands of a person who was his book-keeper, and from whom I can get no satisfactory account; that I am resolved to go and settle them myself, and then return to England:—I have enough to live handsomely upon, I assure you, miss."

"When do you leave Hillden, ma'am?"

"To-morrow morning, miss."

"Will you give me the pleasure of your company at breakfast, before you set off?"

The invitation was willingly accepted, and in a few minutes' time Rachel motioned to Eugene to depart; he complied with her signal, and they wished Mrs. Hutchinbunck a good-night.

CHAP. XVII.

A Farewell.

"EUGENE," said Rachel, immediately on their leaving the inn, "it is but an ill compliment to ask advice after our resolution is fixed ; I will, therefore, not call what I am going to say to you by that name—Suppose, as I have determined on going into a convent in Flanders, and know no one to whom I can confide myself in the intended journey—suppose I were to cross over into Holland with Mrs. Hutchinbunck ?"

"Do you think Mrs. Hutchinbunck an eligible companion ?"

"There are certain conveniences to be considered in the choice of companions, in cases of this kind, which those who would overlook Mrs. Hutchinbunck might, in the end, wish they had given attention to, in preference to the refinement of the person with whom they were to travel. Mrs. Hutchinbunck

chinbunck has seen a good deal of the world in that sphere which is most useful in life, as well as most instructive to those who have their own path to trace through it;—her manners are kind, though not polished; she knows Holland, and I doubt not, when I am arrived there, as it is not far distant from Flanders, will put me into some method of reaching the end of my journey without inconvenience.”

Eugene coincided in opinion with Rachel; and, after some farther conversation on the same subject, he parted from her at the door of her lodgings, promising to meet Mrs. Hutchinbunck on the following morning at breakfast, when Rachel intended to open to her her wish of becoming the companion of her voyage.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck arrived at the appointed time, and, after a little conversation on general topics, Rachel laid before her the idea which had taken possession of her mind. Mrs. Hutchinbunck readily agreed to take the whole charge of her safe conduct to Holland upon herself, and promised, when ar-

rived there, that she would find her a proper companion with whom to pursue the remainder of her journey, not forgetting to tell her of the wonderful sights she would behold in her poor dear Holland.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck designed to embark at Harwich for Holland; Rachel, therefore, considering the distance from Hildden to Harwich, deemed it more expedient for her to leave Hildden immediately with Mrs. Hutchinbunck, than either to go alone to Harwich, and meet her there, or to suffer her companion to return again to Hildden from Haytown, for the sole purpose of joining her. Accordingly, having asked Mrs. Hutchinbunck to defer setting off till the next morning, to which she readily agreed, Rachel immediately began packing up such things as she meant to take with her to the continent.

What clothes she determined upon carrying with her were contained in a large portmanteau, in the middle of which she carefully deposited her notes in a pocket-book, keeping out twenty guineas for present use.

Her packing being finished, and evening
coming

coming on, it became necessary to determine on a point which had been agitated in her mind throughout the whole of the day ; it was, whether she should call upon Mrs. Eringham to bid farewell to her and Alfred : --she considered again and again :--the point on which that consideration turned was a secret doomed to lie for ever buried in her own bosom,—thus she could ask advice of no one how to act :—at length she resolved, that, as she had, the preceding morning, upbraided Alfred to Mrs. Eringham with having so soon forgotten his visits of friendship, she must call upon them before she left Hilden, or have the same reflection she had made on him returned upon herself; accordingly, accompanied by Eugene, she went to their house : Mrs. Eringham alone was at home, Alfred had strolled out with the dusk for air.

The rumour of the village had spared Rachel the pains of explaining the cause of her visit; and as Mrs. Eringham had seemed to expect a farewell visit from Rachel, she could not help conjecturing that it was to avoid her that Alfred had walked out.

Mrs.

Mrs. Eringham took her apart, and again produced every argument she could devise for inducing Rachel either to favour the address of her son, or declare her reason for so peremptorily refusing, as a husband, one whom she avowed herself to esteem as a respected friend. Rachel could only, as before, rather evade her questions, than answer them; and, at parting, drop a tear, which those stealing down the cheeks of Mrs. Eringham challenged from her eye.

On her way home, Eugene entering a cottage, whose owner he wanted to engage to work in Parkinson's gardens on the following day, Rachel, whose spirits were not in a state to bear the farewells of the villagers, by whom she was much and deservedly beloved, walked slowly forward ; and, as she turned a corner of the road near which Tom Smith's house stood, Alfred, coming with a hasty step from the opposite direction, burst full upon her.

The light of the evening was just sufficient to recognize him by : she stopped, he started, and was passing by her—" Alfred ! " she said : he

he stopped also ;—a moment's silence ensued :—“ Oh Rachel, Rachel !” he then replied in a voice scarcely audible—a sigh followed the exclamation.—and in a firmer tone added, “ Have you seen my mother to-night ?”

“ I have.”

“ And *do* you leave England ?”

“ I do.”

“ Heaven ! Heaven bless you every where !” he cried in a voice choked by contending feelings, and, darting across the road, vanished in a moment from her sight.

Rachel stood immoveable, and, before her bewildered thoughts became sufficiently collected to admit reflection on the occurrence of the last moment, Eugene had joined her ; and he having either not seen Alfred leave her, or not choosing to notice that he had observed him, they reached Tom Smith's in silence.

They found Mrs. Hutchinbunck in a little garden by the side of the house, waiting for their return, and joined her in her saunter till Mrs. Smith summoned them to supper ;
after

after which Eugene conducted Mrs. Hutchinbunck to the inn, and Rachel retired to bed ; nor did her reflections deny her the sweets of sleep :—she had reflections, but they were mingled neither with repentance for the past, nor fears for the future ; she had preserved a mean of conduct which she esteemed the right, and she experienced from it a heartfelt satisfaction, which no idle disappointment of a transient pleasure, necessarily foregone to sustain it, could allay.

CHAP. XVIII.

An Admonisher.

ON the following morning, when Rachel arose, Mrs. Smith informed her, that her brother was in the house, and wished to speak to her, if she would give him leave. Rachel feared a message from Alfred or Mrs. Eringham was the business of his visit; she considered it, however, right to see him, and Jacob Lamb accordingly came into her room.

Having entered, he closed the door, and advancing a few steps into the apartment, he said, "I beg your pardon, Miss Rachel, for my intrusion; I hope you'll excuse it; and I hope, besides, you will excuse what I am going to say to you."

Jacob and Rachel had never conversed together, except once in London, on the topic of Alfred's wound; and Rachel felt rather surprised by this address, though she did not hesitate to decide, in her own mind, that the discourse

discourse for which Jacob had apologized, would, from his partiality for Alfred, lean to the same end to which that he had before held with her had inclined : however, with a courteous inclination of her head, she said, " Pray speak, Jacob !"

" I must, Miss Rachel," said Jacob, " I must—I have heard such a sad story about you, I can't help speaking."——

Rachel looked conscious that Jacob was referring to her refusal of Alfred; but did not speak.

Jacob continued : " I hope, for the sake of your own happiness, Miss Rachel, you ain't going to shut yourself up in a convent ?"

" Indeed," answered Rachel, " it is my intention."

" What, for your life?—for ever, miss?—never to come out as long as you live?" asked Jacob eagerly.

" I don't mean that ; but why are you, Jacob, thus interested, thus agitated, about me ?"

" Why, miss---" he hesitated, then said, " let me beg, and beseech of you, miss, not to go into a convent."

" Still

"Still you don't explain the motive of your entreaty."

"For fear you should never come out again."

"But I don't intend to take the vows."

"Pray don't turn Roman Catholic—for heaven's sake don't turn Roman Catholic!"

"Is your fear, then, for my immortal part?" asked Rachel smiling.

"Oh, no," returned Jacob, half catching Rachel's smile; "I have not had much learning, to be sure, but I know that the same God is present to the prayers of the Roman Catholic and the Episcopalian, and that it matters little in what form we address him, so our hearts be pure, and faithful in the religion we follow;---but if you once turn to their way of thinking, turning nun will come after; when you once think their persuasion right, you'll think shutting yourself up from the world right, as they do."

"And if this should happen"—said Rachel.

"Good Lord above, forbid it!" exclaimed Jacob.

"I must

"I must know the cause of this emotion you feel on my account," rejoined Rachel.

"Miss," returned Jacob gravely, "I am sure that you know that we are not born for ourselves alone, but sent into the world to make one another as happy as we can; and I am certain, miss, your heart is too good not to have felt that by so doing we make ourselves happy also."

"Admitted," said Rachel.

"Well, then, it must be wrong to withdraw ourselves from those on whom our presence can bestow this most essential and most desirable source of human riches."

Jacob paused; but as Rachel did not speak, he continued: "I think you will determine to stay in England, since there are hearts in it, to which yours is thus tenderly linked."

"Jacob," replied Rachel, "I am fully aware to what heart you allude, and even expected the reference from you, knowing the terms upon which you stand with him who possesses it:--let me then briefly answer, that there are obligations we owe to ourselves, to which it is the first duty of our lives to conform,

form, and that such is my present situation."

"But, miss," answered Jacob, "only consider—(pray don't think me too bold, I only mean what I think, and trust, is right; nothing more, indeed)—only consider the pains, and pleasure, and expence, Jonathan Parkinson has been at to rear you; to be, as I may say, his greatest comfort: and now if you *should* get into a convent for life, and he should never be able to obtain your freedom, I am sure it would break his heart."

"Are you then so well acquainted with Jonathan Parkinson's heart," said Rachel, "as to be able to decide upon his feelings; and so interested in his happiness, as your late words have seemed to speak you?"

"Jonathan Parkinson, Miss Rachel," returned Jacob, "is so worthy a man, that every person who thinks at all, must wish him a return of that happiness which he is so liberal in his endeavours to bestow on all."

"I have felt, nay I every moment feel, the truth of your assertion," replied Rachel; "all the return I can confer, or his noble
mind

mind will accept, must be the exertions of my heart to contribute to his felicity, by the pleasing and easy task of showing him I am happy under his protection; be assured, then, I will never lose hold of that liberty which can alone make me what I so very earnestly desire to be to him."

"Dear, good young lady, Heaven will reward you both," cried Jacob; "I am easy and happy now, since I have spoken to you, and heard your determination from your own lips:—Then you only intend to stay in the convent till Jonathan Parkinson comes back to Hildden?"

"No longer, if he permits me to return to him."

"Mr. Eugene, I suppose, will know where you are?"

"He will," answered Rachel.

"A good and happy journey to you, miss;—excuse an old man's freedom, and accept his blessing.—God bless you, miss,—good bye," said Jacob, and was moving towards the door.—"Stay an instant," said Rachel; "I beg of you to tell me——" but

Jacob having opened the door, and Eugene appearing upon the stairs, she stopped short, and Jacob, bowing, left the room.

“ A message from Alfred, no doubt ?” cried Eugene, as he entered, casting his eyes towards Jacob.

“ No,” replied Rachel; “ a little friendly advice from his servant not to turn nun.”

“ In the interest of his master, doubtless,” he returned; “ but I believe Jacob does conceive himself a little bit of a philosopher.”

“ If he does,” answered Rachel, “ it is not without just pretensions to the name, for he argues from nature, and never loses sight of reasons ; maxims I would earnestly recommend to many, for their improvement, who would look upon his plain arguments with contempt.”

Eugene smiled at the warmth with which Rachel defended Jacob Lamb ; but, fortunately for her, did not inquire into the topic on which Jacob had discovered himself to be so able a reasoner.

Rachel could not explain to herself why Jacob Lamb was so strongly interested in the
happiness

happiness of Parkinson, but it was a trait of the heart which would have marked out to her idea the character of any individual to be virtuous; and she experienced an inexpressible satisfaction on instantly feeling respect for him, who she found respected her benefactor.

CHAP. XIX.

How to travel with Economy.

AT the appointed time Mrs. Hutchinbunck arrived in the chaise to take up Rachel; and her trunk having been corded by the side of her companion's, she entered the vehicle, and once more left her favourite Hildden, her spirits alone supported by a consciousness of the propriety of her conduct.

The town in ——shire, where the company to whom Richard Hutchinbunck had joined himself were at that time exposing their persons to the pelting of orange-peel and nut-shells, was about ninety miles distant from Hildden; and Mrs. Hutchinbunck remarked, that, if they made a good push, they might reach it the next day at noon.

Before the stage was completed, a new trait in Mrs. Hutchinbunck's character opened itself to Rachel:—the chaise stopped at a turnpike-gate, and a man extended his hand towards the window, with “Nine-pence,

pence, ladies."—"Nine-pence!" exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck; "it's only six-pence." The man laughed contemptuously, and repeated, "Nine-pence."—"I know you are imposing on me," she returned.—"I get nothing by it," replied the man; "the money goes to the trustees."—"Well, then," said she, "as you would lose nothing by it, you might take six-pence of me for once, for I have no halfpence."—The man received her suspicion, as he called it, of his character in very warm terms, and Rachel immediately called out, "I have halfpence, ma'am."—Mrs. Hutchinbunck took the copper, and, placing a sixpence on their top, gave them to the man, with—"There, fellow! it is not worth disputing about three-pence—Drive on, boy." She then maintained a momentary silence till the chaise was in motion, when she exclaimed, "Lord, miss! if this is the way you do when you travel, you are likely to be cheated out of a fine deal of money, if you always give these kind of people what they ask."

"But the payment at a turnpike gate is regulated by government," said Rachel.

"Ay, so it is," returned she; "but these fellows, I often think, ask a little more than they should do, and put it into their own pockets: besides, there's no harm in trying, and sometimes a good deal is lost by people not having their wits about them at such places; I have travelled many a hundred miles, and many a hundred to that: Lord bless you, I *had* halfpence in my pocket."

At the end of the stage, "Please to remember the boy," was the first demand which seemed to leave its value open to the liberality of Mrs. Hutchinbunck. "There's a shilling for you," she said; "but you don't deserve it, for you have been an hour longer than you ought to have been coming."

The boy muttered, that it was an eighteen-mile stage, and the lady ought to allow him something more.

The lady returned, "that they had been long enough on the road to have gone thirty miles; and that if he did not like what she had given him, he was at liberty to return it."

"I sup-

"I suppose you'll send something back for the hostler?" said the boy, in no very gracious tone.

"If he had wanted any thing of me, I think it might have been worth his while to have asked me for it himself."

"I'll take care of it for him."

"I'll remember him the next time I go that way; I don't choose to trust my money with people I don't know."

"He'll think I kept it from him," returned the boy.

"What's that to me?" said she.—
"Would you have me go back to Hildden to settle your quarrels?—Go out of the room, I desire."

Farther altercation was prevented by the succeeding chaise being announced to be ready.—Rachel had, by her own desire, given the entire management of their journey to Mrs. Hutchinbunck, previous to their setting out; thus she heard the preceding dialogue without interposing—without a smile she could not.

On entering the inn-yard, the hostler of
I 4 the

the house appeared in person, and the liberal sum of two-pence was thrown into his hat, with a look at the Hilden boy that implied, " I can be generous where I please."

The two successive stages passed off with nothing particular to amuse the attention of Rachel, except the exercise of similar devices to those already described on the part of Mrs. Hutchinbunck; some of which proved successful, others miscarried: but in the latter case she maintained an equal good humour as in the former, contenting herself with the ability of being able, by her discretion, to save in the aggregate, and declaring that her economy proceeded not from avarice, but from the hatred she bore to being imposed upon: and this was true; but it was also true, that the fear of appearing without judgment was carried by her to such an excess, as often to render her the very thing she feared to be suspected of being.

At the end of the third stage, Rachel gave a hint that she wished for dinner, and Mrs. Hutchinbunck immediately said, " I think I could eat a bit of something myself; but

but as to a regular dinner, miss, it is never worth while on the road, a snap answers all the purpose; you may make as hearty a meal, and it costs not half the money."

Rachel cared little what her meal was called, so her hunger was satisfied, and immediately left its arrangement to her adept companion.

Some bread and cheese and a pint of porter were accordingly ordered, and introduced: the cheese was Gloucester; and Mrs. Hutchinbunck having looked at it, said, with a wink to Rachel, "Waiter, have you no other cheese in the house?"—"No, ma'am," was the answer.—"It is too old for me," she replied; "I durst not eat it."

The waiter left the room; and shortly after the landlord, as Mrs. Hutchinbunck had predicted, entered with a plate of ham, which he begged the lady would accept instead of cheese.—"I'll taste it, sir," she answered, "as you have been at the trouble of bringing it, but I had made a very good snap off a crust, and a draught of the porter."—On the landlord's leaving the apartment, how-

ever, she began upon the ham, advising Rachel to do the same, and priding herself upon the device by which she had obtained it.

Nothing new occurred till their arrival at the principal inn of a large market-town where they were to pass the night, and where Rachel expected to hear her companion order, at least, a hot supper, in consideration of their slight dinner.

On being shewn into a room, a dashing waiter, whose appearance seemed to indicate that the house was unaccustomed to sneaking travellers, advanced with a bow, and—"Do you choose tea, ladies?"

"Tea at nine o'clock!" exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck: "No, I'd rather by half go to bed, for I am tired to death with riding."

The waiter left the room, and the chamber-maid appeared, to ask if the ladies would choose their beds.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck took upon herself that office, and followed the girl out of the room, while Rachel remained standing before a window which looked into the market-place.

Presently

Presently the host himself entered with the bill of fare, which he presented to Rachel; and she was just desiring him to leave it till the other lady returned, when Mrs. Hutchinbunck came in.

“What will the ladies like for supper?” asked the landlord, extending the hand which held the paper towards Mrs. Hutchinbunck!

“Me!” cried Mrs. Hutchinbunck; “bread and cheese, or any thing; for my part I am not hungry, I never eat supper.”

Rachel felt confused for her companion; the landlord stared, half smiling; and, as Rachel’s eyes met his countenance, she could hardly forbear catching its impression, but said, “Pray, sir, let us have a fowl and a tart.”

“I am sure I shan’t eat a morsel of it,” cried Mrs. Hutchinbunck; “I can’t.”

“Then we will call it my supper,” replied Rachel, with a significant glance to the host, who bowed and retired; but when supper made its appearance, Mrs. Hutchinbunck sat down to it as readily as her friend, remarking, that the people of the inn seemed

to understand their business, and that she might as well eat as not, for she saw they were the kind of folks that would make their guests pay a certain sum whether they fared well or ill, and that she had only said she had no appetite, to try them.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck had been a landlady herself, and thus soon perceived who did, and who did not, cut their cloth by her measure.

In the morning, Mrs. Hutchinbunck having risen rather earlier than her companion, said she would go down and order breakfast; when Rachel followed her, she was not a little surprised at seeing upon the table, tea, coffee, ham, eggs, toast and biscuits: as the repast had been ordered by her economical friend, and tea was all that could have been required of her to call for, she could not forbear hinting her thoughts.

"Lord bless you, miss!" exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck, in answer to her remark, "do you know no more of travelling, and the ways of inns, than that? Why, you pay but a shilling a-head for your breakfast, have
what

what you like at it ; and you must pay that if you have nothing but tea and bread and butter :—I always make my breakfast my best meal when I am travelling ;—I shall ring the bell, and ask if they have any radishes, and order another egg or two.”

About two o'clock in the afternoon, our travellers arrived at a village which was but thirteen miles distant from Haytown ; and the only four horses which the landlord possessed were gone forward to Haytown with a nobleman's coach.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck applied to the boy who had driven them from the last place to proceed ; but he peremptorily refused, the stage having been twenty miles, and his horses having gone it the day before : from persuasions Mrs. Hutchinbunck had recourse to menaces ; but the boy could not be prevailed upon, and she was obliged to submit.

At the recommendation of Rachel they dined, and the hours were then passed by Mrs. Hutchinbunck in looking out for the return of the horses, and grumbling that they did not appear : at length they arrived ; and
after

after a short space of time being allowed them for rest, involuntarily on the part of Mrs. Hutchinbunck, they set forward on their journey.

The horses had been fagged; thus, of course, travelled slowly; and as they entered Haytown the clock struck ten.—Arrived at the inn, they were ushered into the bar, and the landlady following, with many curtsseys, informed them that she had not a place vacant in her own house; but if they would excuse walking a few steps, she had a cousin, a perfumer, in the street, who often lent her a room or two on such occasions.—There was no alternative; so the landlady's plan was adopted, and she complaisantly conducted them herself to her cousin's, where they were shewn into a neat parlour, and promised an excellent bed; and the landlady then, without waiting for orders, ran home to prepare them, what she styled, "a nice bit of supper."

No sooner were they left alone than Mrs. Hutchinbunck, whose spirit began to be warmed by finding herself in the same place
where

where her undutiful son was incurring, in her opinion, so indelible a disgrace, proposed to Rachel immediately to engage somebody to go in search of him ; but Rachel explained to Mrs. Hutchinbunck, that she thought it rather doubtful whether he would obey a summons to attend her, under his present circumstances, as he might easily conjecture the motive of her coming ; and advised her to lay aside all thoughts of seeing him till the following morning, when she might learn where he lodged, and, by calling upon him, prevent his escaping her.

With some persuasion Mrs. Hutchinbunck agreed to Rachel's plan, and at a little before midnight they were conducted by the woman of the house to a bed-chamber above the parlour ; and, on her leaving the apartment, she requested them not to be alarmed by any talking they might hear in the next room, as she had some lodgers in it who were very good kind of people, but, she must say, they were none of the quietest with their tongues.

CHAP. XX.

Warmth, but not Fire.

MRS. Hutchinbunck was soon undressed and in bed, probably anxious to drown the tedious interval between that time and her proposed interview with her son in the morning in sleep.—Rachel, who had no such motive of impatience, had been more deliberate in her undressing, and just finished papering her hair, when her companion entered the bed.

“Good-night, miss,” said Mrs. Hutchinbunck; “I am so tired, you must excuse my going to sleep.”

“Good-night, ma’am,” returned Rachel; and scarcely had she pronounced the words before she began to hear the voices, of which the landlady had spoken, in the adjoining room, and which Mrs. Hutchinbunck’s uninterrupted talking had before prevented her from noticing.

The first words she distinguished were uttered by a man, and the tone of voice in which he spoke them seemed to show him struggling

struggling between anger and affliction; the words were—"Am not I the father of these wretched infants? can I see them, you, myself, all perish?—No; sooner shall this pistol—"

"Oh! what do you mean?" exclaimed a female voice.

"To force the means of life," returned the man, "from them who will not be injured by the loss of what I shall gain."

"What!" replied the woman, "become a highwayman! a common robber! Think where such an attempt may end!"

"I know," he answered, "it is a doubtful chance between comfort and an ignominious death.—Comfort! oh, no, no, no; that's impossible! such means cannot bring comfort."

"Then relinquish the horrid idea," said the woman.

"To look on one more dreadful; you and my children dying in want!" replied he.

"Yet, 'twere mercy in you, indeed it were, to see them thus, rather than leave them the stigmatized, the cursed, abandoned widow and

and orphans of an executed robber," uttered the woman in a strain of the greatest agony.

"Oh! that they would name the sum," thought Rachel, "that would relieve their misery; and, if within my ability, they should have it." Her reflections were interrupted by the answer of the man; the first part of his sentence she lost, but he concluded it with—"Wretch, to upbraid me with loving you to the excess of risking to expose my own life to preserve yours!"

Rachel was on the point of calling to Mrs. Hutchinbunck, but her loud suspiration convinced her she was asleep.

The woman answered, in a voice half choked by tears, "Go, then, follow the instinct of your mind: I will not ask you to forego it; I will only supplicate Heaven in your behalf, and teach my children to join my prayer."

"Woman! woman!" he replied, "do not quite unman me; hold your words yet an instant; I am already too much a coward to stare indigence in the face: I dare just meet death, and this weapon——"

"Oh,

" Oh, Robert ! my husband," cried she, " desist—your children ! think on them !—on my knees——"

" Let go my arm !" he exclaimed wildly, " or I must turn the weapon, directed at my own head, to yours ; the torture of my brain must be ended, and thus we'll die together."

Rachel insensibly called for help, at the same moment that the smothered shrieks of the female seemed to declare the man to be struggling with her ; and, running out of her chamber, she immediately perceived the door of the adjoining room, which she burst open ; and seeing a woman on her knees, and a man in the attitude of menace she had expected to find him, she with difficulty uttered, " Hold, monster ; hold !" while she leaned, trembling, for support, against the wall.

" Rachel !" cried the female, springing from the ground, and running towards her she named—" It is ; it is Rachel !"—The person's tone changed as she spoke these words, and Rachel, to her astonishment, recognised the voice and countenance of

Eliza

Eliza Oxmondeley ; and, forgetting the unjust suspicions she had entertained against her, in her anxiety to save her at the present moment, she met her with extended arms, and folded her to her breast.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck, who, having been once burnt out of a house she had inhabited in Holland, never heard a noise in the night but she imagined there was the same cause for alarm she had before experienced, having been awakened by Rachel's cries for assistance, immediately sprang from her bed, and having thrown the bed-quilt over her, in addition to the flannel gown and red baize drawers in which she always slept, had now gained the landing, where she stood vociferating " Fire ! fire ! fire !" without intermission.

The man and woman of the house, who were not yet in bed, ran immediately, with lights, to the spot from whence the cry of alarm was proceeding, and were calling out " Where ? where ?" in answer to Mrs. Hutchinbunck's exclamation of " Fire ! fire !"

The noise on the landing called forth the
man

man who had threatened the life of Miss Oxmondeley; and stalking out of the chamber with a stately step, and the pistol still in his hand, he met Mrs. Hutchinbunck face to face; and no sooner did she behold him than all her alarm of fire subsided, and all her fury settled on him, for—she beheld her son.

“ Lord deliver me !” she cried ; “ you here !—you in this house !—you ungracious boy, and a pistol in your hand ! Oh, good folks, take the pistol away from him—pray take the pistol away from him—he’s my son, and I dare say he’s going to shoot me, because I won’t give my consent to his going amongst a beggarly set of players.”

“ Accursed be the hand that lifts itself against a parent !” exclaimed Richard in a tragedy tone, and at the same time throwing the pistol from him in a stage attitude.

“ Don’t use your bombastical cant to me,” returned she, “ and your struts and grimaces ; saying and doing one thing, and meaning another : I am sure you have almost terrified me to death with the uproar you

have

have made in the house to night, for I dare say it was you I heard squalling."

"No, madam," said Rachel, coming forward, "it was I who called for assistance; I was alarmed by some words I overheard from the room next to ours, and——"

"I must apologize for having distressed and idly alarmed you," said Miss Oxmondeley, interrupting her; "that gentleman and I were rehearsing part of a tragedy I had written for my own benefit."

"You on the stage, Eliza!—you on the stage, Miss Oxmondeley?" cried Rachel; "Surely Sir Gilbert can't know this!"

"A baronet's daughter turned stage-player too!" exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck; "Lord have mercy upon me! where will the folly of people have an end?"

"Ma'am!" exclaimed Miss Oxmondeley, in a tone which seemed to emulate Richard's swelling accents, "I am the mistress of myself, and of my own actions; at least, I trust I am not accountable to you for my conduct."

"Well, ma'am," returned Mrs. Hutchinbunck,

chimbunck, " who says you are ?—but you need not be so huffish, because a little good advice is given you."

Miss Oxmondeley was going to reply, but Rachel prevented her, by saying, " This lady is Mrs. Hutchinbunck, and you must make her feelings for her son's conduct the apology of her words :—let us part for the night," she continued, endeavouring to move Mrs. Hutchinbunck back to her chamber, in pity to the ridiculous figure she displayed, " and see each other again in the morning."

" Oh, no !" cried Miss Oxmondeley, catching hold of Rachel's hand, " I cannot part with you the moment I find you ; I cannot, indeed : you must forgive the unjust suspicions which the harassed state of my mind induced me to entertain of you at our last parting ; indeed you would forgive me if you knew all I have suffered since.—I never supposed you had taken my jewels for your own private interest, only to prevent my putting in execution the scheme in which they were to assist me ; but John has explained

plained to me your innocence, and I must talk to you ; I must, indeed."

" And so must I to you, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck, addressing her son, " and before I sleep I will too, since I see you before me !—Miss, have I your leave," she continued, turning to Rachel, " to take Richard into our chamber a little while ? You and your friend, you know, can go down into the parlour, or into her room."

Rachel was obliged to acquiesce, and the enraged matron led the way with—"Come, sir ;" her son following with an obedient step, but disobedient visage.

CHAP. XXI.

How an Elopement may be stopped without Pursuers.

ELIZA led Rachel into her apartment, and, on the door being closed, Rachel thus addressed her : “ By what means do I see you here ?—How am I to account for your being upon the stage ?—Are you here alone ?—Are you married ? ”

“ No.”

“ Not married ! Has John Morden deserted you ? ”

“ Deserted me ! Oh Rachel, do not stab my heart with so unkind, so unjust a suspicion of the beloved partner of my heart :—He is here in the next room—John Mor—”

“ And you not married ? ” interrupted Rachel.

“ Only hear me :—it is impossible we should be ;—one of his legs has been broken, and he has been confined to his bed with it almost from the first night of my eloping with him.”

Rachel now really pitied where she had before condemned: "I am sorry for you both," she said.

"Oh!" cried Miss Oxmondeley, catching the hand of Rachel, "your eyes imply, that if I had followed your advice, all the straits of poverty that have, or may befall me, had been avoided.—Don't think me obstinate, pray don't, Rachel, for speaking the feelings of my heart; but, indeed, I had rather be with John Morden in the most abject indigence, than with a wretch like Sir Bauble in the luxury of pride and riches."

"You know that he is dead, I suppose?"

"The public prints informed me of it, and I rejoiced on your account.—Oh Rachel! how sincerely, how truly I pitied you, when John Morden related to me the occurrence in the prison!—Can you believe that I pitied you?—No, you cannot; for you doubtless thought, that if my father persisted in cruelty towards you, his daughter should have known your heart better:—she did know it, she adores its purity, its integrity; but in the midst of her own afflictions,—yes, Rachel, afflictions

afflictions—for hope and fear combated so forcibly in my breast, as to render anguish the predominant feeling, and, under its influence, I became unjust to her, for whom I most wished to evince my esteem:—Can you, will you forgive me?”

“Sincerely I do,” replied Rachel; “it must be a severer judge than myself, who will not forgive one error of the head, where she has found many virtues of the heart.”

Eliza threw her arms round Rachel's neck, and embraced her; Rachel caught the pleasure she had inspired, and pressed her affectionately to her breast.—Eliza had met, unexpectedly, the friend she most wished to behold, and by whom she had feared, when she did meet her, she should not be so cordially received; Rachel was more forgiving than her most sanguine wishes could have made her, and the reverse of her expectations, so flattering to her feelings, melted Eliza into tears.

“Can I see John?” asked Rachel.

“He sleeps,” answered Eliza, “and I must not awake him, for his limb has been very painful all day, and he has taken a sleep-

ing draught; but indulge me, in suffering me to tell you all that has befallen me since we parted last; I am sure you will sympathize in my misfortunes, though I refused the advice by which I might have avoided them."

"To dwell upon what might have been done, to avoid the calamities into which any one has fallen, rather than to seek a present balm for their relief, displays a judgment much more obstinate than friendly," replied Rachel; "I would have mine the latter."

"Ever kind and good as you are," returned Eliza, "how could I entertain unjust suspicions of you?—But I will dwell no more on the only action of my life of which I repent, and proceed to inform you of other events, which, though they have brought me sorrow in their consequence, have never given me a momentary regret for the cause whence they have been produced.—When you were taken away from my father's house, by Blackman, I was again left in possession of my jewels; and, having written a note to be given to Sir Gilbert when he should awake from his afternoon nap, I left the house immediately on his retiring to his study after dinner,

dinner, with a single change of linen crammed into my pockets, and the case which contained my precious diamonds, held by both my hands, within my muff; I ran out into the square, and proceeded to the first stand of coaches, where, having entered one, I ordered the man to drive me to a shop where I knew ladies of fashion were accommodated with money, on goods left in retention.—I offered my diamonds in pawn; they had cost nearly twelve hundred pounds, and I expected to have obtained, at least, one thousand for them, as their fashion was of the newest invention, in addition to the real value of their stones; but four hundred and seventy pounds only were offered me: I was surprised and disappointed, but I had no alternative; I must take that, or retain what was useless to me, and I accepted the money. Having put the notes I had received into my pocket-book, and holding it where I had before carried my diamonds, I returned to my coach, and was driven to the lodgings of John Morden,—not doubting but that he was waiting on the tiptoe of expectation to

receive me : you may easily conceive how great a shock I experienced, when, on alighting, and inquiring for him of the master of the house, I learnt that he had that morning been carried to prison for debt.

“ When I sufficiently recovered from the astonishment into which this intelligence had thrown me, to be able to collect my thoughts for speech, I inquired of my informer if he knew to how much the incurred debt amounted ; he answered me, that he believed it was somewhat less than one hundred pounds. — Once more anxiety vanished, with my learning that I had the power to release him ; and taking the sum named from my store of notes, I folded them in a blank cover, which I then sealed and directed, entreating the man of the house to carry them to the place of John’s confinement, and inform him that I was at his lodgings. — In my earnestness to accomplish what I desired to be effected, I did not forget to see him whom I requested to be my agent, and he readily agreed to act as I should instruct him. While he was gone, I was left alone in John’s room ; in one corner

ner of it stood his trunk corded up, and upon it lay the fatal pair of pistols, which cost me so much uneasiness : from the former, I augured, beyond a doubt, that it was prepared for our intended journey ; and I derived, from my thoughts, something like a conviction of his acquiescence in my proposal, which gave me great satisfaction.

“ After a tedious interval of expectation, mingled with fear, which I could not define, nor yet account for, a quick step on the stairs drew me to the door of the apartment, and, as I reached it, the desired object of all my anxiety and all my joy met me, clasped me in his arms, and hailed me his angelic deliverer.—Oh, Rachel ! forgive the energy with which I speak of that moment of happiness.—When my first transports subsided, I felt that I ought to speak on the cause of our meeting ; but the same ardent declaration of love, that had flowed from my pen, refused to flow from my tongue ; he relieved me from the confusion I was in, by kneeling to thank me for the confidence I had placed in him, and telling me that he had

formed a plan to elude Sir Gilbert's most diligent pursuit of us.

" It was, that instead of following the hacknied route of elopements, in leading those who are disposed to pursue a chace to Gretna-Green, and by all run-away couples following the same track, making it an indisputable point to all pursuers which road to take, we should immediately proceed to Windsor, and obtain there a special licence to be married on the following morning, which, he made appear to me, would not be a more expensive mode than the journey to Scotland; and we were both of us at that time so great novices in the laws of the kingdom, as not to know that our being under age would prove an obstacle to our obtaining such a licence without the consent of our parents, or friends appearing in lieu of them.

" According to his plan, a chaise was procured, and we got into it, dark as the evening was, determined to proceed to Windsor that night, thinking ourselves safer any where than in London, lest the servant who had been my ambassador to John's lodgings, should be induced,

duced, by Sir Gilbert's threats, or promises, to betray where we might be found.

“ While rattling over the London stones, I felt no alarm ; but by the time we had left them a few miles behind us, travelling in the dark, though protected by John Morden, with his brace of pistols ready prepared to defend me, and for that purpose had he purchased them, produced in me no very pleasant sensations ; I dreaded a robbery ; I had a presentiment that I should lose my newly-acquired riches, and I could not help imparting my fears to my companion : he encouraged me, while he ridiculed my alarm, and bade me place faith in his weapons ; I listened, and almost began to think myself in the wrong, as a dozen miles more passed without any occurrence that tended to verify my fears.

“ John Morden talked in raptures of the event which he purposed should take place on the following day. ‘ But how is the licence to be procured,’ said I, “ if we should be robbed to-night ?’ — Scarcely had I uttered the words, when the chaise stop-

ped, and 'Deliver!' was sounded on each side of the carriage, by men on horseback.

"I screamed; John immediately levelled a pistol at the one on his side, which the man knocked from his hand before he could draw the trigger, and then presented one himself at John's face, vowing, with the most dreadful oaths, that he was a dead man if he stirred a joint:—the other, meanwhile, had entered the chaise on my side, and having rifled us, they rode off. John immediately snatched up his other pistol, and fired them both off in the direction which the clattering of their horses' feet informed us the highwaymen had taken, but without effect.

"Terror and disappointment had made me a petrification: John directly proposed to the postillion, for them to take the horses from the chaise, and gallop after the robbers, in the hope of recovering what they had taken from us. On hearing this proposal, I first spoke, and besought John not to leave me, or expose himself to farther danger. He answered me, that we had sustained

tained too great a loss, not to hazard something for its recovery ; and having said all in his power to raise my courage, while the boy was taking off the horses, he mounted, and with his companion set off in as full speed as those whom he pursued had made.

“ Oh, Rachel ! what was then my situation, it is impossible to describe ;—seated alone in a carriage, with both the doors open, in a strange road, in the middle of the night (for various obstacles had delayed us in leaving London till nine o’clock), and not a single star to cheer me with the dimmest view of any object that might be near me !—To stir from the spot where I was placed, would have been madness : thus I compelled myself to remain where I was, and, for more than an hour, not a single sound, except my own murmurs, to which I could not forbear giving vent, broke the stillness of the night.

“ The highwaymen had taken the road towards Windsor.

“ At length I heard the trampling of horses from the direction I wished ; it con-

tinued to approach, and when arrived within three yards of the chaise, I could discern the boy riding on one horse, and leading the other; but I saw not John. In the most incoherent words, I instantly asked for him; and the boy, in almost as great a trepidation as myself, answered, 'That the gentleman had fallen from his horse, and had been so much hurt, that he could not get upon it again.'——'Where is he?' was my immediate question.—'Between three and four miles off,' the boy replied; 'and that the gentleman had ordered him to drive down the chaise to the place where he had left him, and take him up.'—I asked no farther questions, but besought the boy to use all the speed he was able in bringing me to the spot.

"It was now past midnight, and the rising moon, though obscured by clouds, was beginning to give a faint light, which proved to me no small comfort. In about half an hour; a space which anxiety swelled, in my idea, to an immeasurable length, we reached the spot where John lay, lamed
beyond

beyond the power of assisting himself to rise from it;—the hurt was in his right leg; with great difficulty the postillion and myself lifted him into the chaise, and placed him at the bottom, with his back supported against one of the doors, in order that his leg might lie extended, for he found himself unable to bend it.

“ We proceeded, with a slow pace, to Windfor; some of the servants of the inn were fortunately still up; John was carried by them to a bed, and a surgeon immediately called to his assistance. On seeing the limb, he, without hesitation, pronounced the bone to be broken; and, on examination, he declared it to be a compound fracture.”

CHAP. XXII.

The second Part of the same Story.

“**T**HE limb being set with much pain to the patient, the surgeon retired, and one of the female servants of the house, and myself, sat in his room to watch him during the night. It passed in pain to him, in agony to me; he was suffering bodily torture, I the more acute pangs of mental misery: coupled with this wretched misfortune, I foresaw slander hanging on the tongue of the world, ready to defame my reputation; and poverty, if not a prison, awaiting us, both, in consequence of the expences which must be inevitably incurred to preserve the life of him on whom hung my existence; and our inability, from the loss we had sustained, to defray them.—I could not even hope, much less expect, forgiveness from my father, and I feared he would alike deny me any pecuniary assistance. I could, however, lose nothing by a trial to excite his compassion, and I accordingly,

ingly, on the following morning, wrote to him a letter, wherein I related my distress with all the warmth I felt it; and in order to prevent any attempt, on his part, to get me again into his power, and compel me to marry contrary to my inclination, I subscribed myself Eliza Morden. When I had taken this step, I felt humiliated by it, as I considered the note I had left for my father at my departure written in a strain of the haughtiest independence; and I then reflected how soon I was fallen from what I had then believed myself: however, necessity had dictated the act; and had it been still undone, I must have acted again as I had done, no other expedient was left me; for to you I durst not, on any account, have directed a petition, after my conduct to you immediately before our separation, had I even known where you then were; and I had not another friend in the world to whom I could apply with the slightest hope of obtaining the grant of my request.

“ In as short a time as it was possible for my letter to be returned to me, it came back

unopened, with my father's name scratched out, and mine inserted as a direction.—I was first piqued, and afterwards affected, by this utter contempt shown me by my only parent; and, under this impression, I enclosed my letter in a fresh cover, and threw it into the letter-box.—Again I repented, but again I could only ask myself, what other step it would have been possible for me to pursue, that would not have been even more unlikely to succeed than the one I had adopted.

“ In the same space of time as before, my second letter returned, in the like state as my first had come back : my misery now rose to a pitch of intolerable suffering ; I had no one to whom I could impart my feelings, and yet I could not wholly restrain them within my own breast.

“ John continued to mend, at least he did not grow worse than he had been during the first twenty-four hours after the setting of his limb ; but still I was forbidden to converse with him, any more than making or replying to inquiries relative to himself.

“ Oh, Rachel ! I was now more forlorn,
more

ed. more wretched, than any distressed girl I
as ever read of!"

t; "I hope, then," said Rachel, "the les-
by son has been instructive, in teaching you to
e form scenes of future happiness for yourself,
I in visions less extravagant than those usually
found in romance. But pray proceed."

it "Mrs. Wilson, the landlady of the inn,"
continued Eliza, "a widow, was what is
usually termed a good sort of a woman; that
is, she would have conferred any kindness on
another which did not interfere with her own
happiness or purse; but where it did, she
thought it no sin to follow the old proverb,
and remember that 'Charity begins at home.'

"She had perceived my distress, and of-
ten soothed and consoled me; but as my
anxiety continued visibly to increase, though
my husband, for as such was John known
in the house, was evidently recovering, she,
after a few days, hinted to me her suspicion
that I had some other cause for sorrow be-
sides the illness of my husband, and requested
me to tell her what she could do to serve me.

"This challenge to give her my confi-
dence

dence I could not forbear accepting ; and as she knew the circumstances of the robbery on the road, I had only to inform her, that, on that night, we had lost all the worldly riches we possessed, except seven guineas, which, being in a small purse in one corner of my pocket, had escaped their search.

“ Mrs. Wilson had before been sorry for *me* ; she was now sorry for herself. She did not, however, openly express her feelings, but asked me a variety of questions relative to my situation in life. whence I came, whether I was going, and lastly, whether I or my husband were of any trade, as she expressed herself, and whether we had no clothes belonging to us besides those we wore. John’s trunk was so small, that she might, without much under-rating it, have mistaken it for a large-sized dressing-box.

“ I knew not how to answer her questions without wounding my own feelings by confessing myself fallen in life, as I then was ; and, half distracted by my own ideas, I exclaimed, ‘ Oh heaven ! that I knew but the means of gaining a reputable subsistence ! ’

“ I was

"I was then in the bar, and the landlady's two daughters were present, one of whom, on hearing me utter this wish, said, without directing her discourse particularly to me, 'What a pity it is the lady has not been brought up to the stage!'

" 'Why do you lament it?' I asked.

" 'Because my uncle has a company, and he wants a lady just at present.'

" 'Fortunate chance!' I cried. 'The stage is my profession.'—Don't blame me, Rachel, for a falsehood, on which my very means of existence depended, and by which no one could be injured; and I feared not to gain it, if I did not boldly declare myself qualified to undertake it. I inquired where Mrs. Wilson's brother was to be found. She told me that he was then in Windsor, come with the intention of engaging an actress from the company at that time performing in the town.

"I entreated to see him, and was invited by the landlady to take my tea with her in half an hour's time, when she told me Mr. Cooper would certainly be of the party.

"I then

“ I then left Mrs. Wilson and her daughters, under pretence of visiting my husband; in fact, to reflect on the step I was about to take.—I was the daughter of a baronet, had been bred up in affluence, had mixed in the first society, and now I was about to become a strolling player.—The part I was going to take in life was, decidedly, in the general acceptance of the world, a disgrace to my family; but that family had renounced me, and all I now thought it became me to consider was, whether going upon the stage was a disgrace to myself as an individual woman. I concluded that it was not: I should be as much mistress of my own honour in that situation as in any other. I had always been of opinion, that it is not any situation which can particularly sully a character, but the disposition of the person placed in that situation; and that there are no temptations which a woman disposed to withstand them may not avoid in any line of life; and no faults but what she may equally commit in any, if so stand her inclination. I had been no *more* than a *woman* when I was the acknowledged

knowledge daughter of Sir Gilbert ; and I should be no *less* than a *woman* when upon the stage. I even began to think, so much do our opinions vary with our circumstances, that the woman, as *actress*, deserved more real merit in the world for honestly supporting herself, than the woman, as a *baronet's daughter*, could do, who had no merit but that of throwing away what she had not known the pains of acquiring.

“ Thus determined, I went down to tea in the bar, more happy than I can express ; and, in a few minutes after, in came my landlady's brother.

“ Mr. Cooper was introduced to me ; and, having heard a feigned account which I gave him of myself, he agreed to engage me at twenty-five shillings a week, and a benefit in each place, provided he could obtain leave for me to play a night in Windsor, and that he then liked me.

“ He inquired what character I should like to play ; and, as all parts were alike indifferent to me, I fixed on one which I happened to know by heart : it was Beatrice,
in

in 'Much ado about Nothing;' and a fortunate thing it was for me that my turn for play-reading had made me perfect in the principal character of this comedy, for the next evening was fixed upon for my appearance.

"I now went to John; and, having sent the servant who was attending him out of the chamber, I informed him of my whole plan, and instructed him how he was to avoid betraying to the manager that I had fabricated the account of my great theatrical eclat, which I had related to him. My dear John seemed determined to be thankful for whatever I should do for our support, and only gave me one slight hint how much mortified he was to have lost his expected commission, by saying, 'That, when sufficiently recovered, he would go as a volunteer into some marching regiment, where he hoped soon to rise by attention to the profession.'

"Preliminaries thus settled, through necessity, I went, on the following morning, to the theatre to rehearse; and my ignorance

rance of some stage customs, when I arrived there, was easily construed into my confusion at rehearsing in a strange company, which any one who has ever trodden the boards knows to be a much more formidable ordeal than the actual performance at night ; for an audience generally comes good-naturedly disposed towards a first appearance, whereas performers fear to be outdone, and are jealous before they know whether they have cause.

“ One of the first London performers happened to be playing at that time with the Windsor company. He did Benedict to my Beatrice ; and much was I indebted to him for the success I obtained in the character ; for, with the liberality that always accompanies real merit, he gave me, during our rehearsal, many hints for my advantage.

“ I will say nothing now of the frights and fears which accompanied my first scenes, and the rapture with which my heart beat upon the applause given to my latter ones. Suffice it for me to tell you, that Mr. Cooper declared

declared himself very well satisfied with me, and directly on my return to the inn ratified the agreement which had before been verbally made between us.

“ I immediately flew to John with the news of my success ; but it had reached him before I arrived with it : thus he was prepared to congratulate me the moment he saw me.

“ I saw John was mortified, notwithstanding his endeavours to conceal it, at our fall ; for such I must call it : though I declare to you, had I been born to gain my own subsistence, I should always have preferred the stage to any other mode of acquiring it. There is an exquisite sensation attached to believing ourselves in any romantic situation of love or madness, which we know shall end at a certain time, and we not be the worse for having seemed to experience it.

“ We had already been twelve days at Windsor, and the surgeon declared it impossible that John could be moved, by the most easy conveyance, in less than another month. I had resolved not to stir without him, and Mr. Cooper with much kindness allowed me
another

another month, before I should join him, on my solemn promise of not disappointing him at that period.

“ I asked him what characters would, in particular, be required of me to play. He gave me a list of them, and I sat down to hard study, without delay.—Nature had given me an excellent memory, and I never thanked her more feelingly for any gift that she had deigned to bestow on me.

“ At the time appointed for our setting out from Windsor, John having continued to recover as fast as we could expect, we left it in the stage-waggon; a mode of travelling which was recommended to us by the surgeon; as, in it, he could lie extended on a litter, with little less convenience to himself than on a bed.

“ It was at B—— in ——shire where I was to join Mr. Cooper's company, and we reached it without my dear John having suffered by the journey.—When we had played a month there, which was as long as the size of the town could afford to find us business, Haytown, where we now are, was fixed.

on as our next place of destination; but, as Mr. Cooper intended new fitting up the theatre here, which could not be done, even under his own direction, in less than a fortnight, he resolved to send his company, in the mean time, to play at a village in an adjacent county, where he knew no company had been for many years; and on account of the difficulty with which John still travelled, though he was able to walk on crutches, and my aversion to being parted from him, he did not oblige me to go with them, and accordingly John and I came directly forward with him to Haytown.

“ Mr. Cooper, on our arrival here, assisted me in procuring these lodgings: he is a worthy man, and has been uniform in his kindness to us; and I have not felt one wish beyond what I enjoy, except to be out of his debt, for a long bill which he paid for us at Windsor, and which we are to return him by instalments.—In order to be the sooner able to discharge it, it was my business to stretch every nerve to draw a good house at my approaching benefit: accordingly, during the
 . . . vacant

vacant fortnight which was allowed me, I set about composing a play, which I resolved to have represented on my night : when I had finished it, I read it to Mr. Cooper ; he approved my piece, and my intention ; and, consequently, cast, and put it into rehearsal, as soon as the company arrived here ; and to-morrow night, Rachel, it is to be performed."

CHAP. XXIII.

*Convince the Understanding, and you correct
the Heart.*

“NOT, if my persuasions have effect,” said Rachel: “let me entreat you to give up immediately a mode of life, in which you confess necessity, more than inclination, has led you. I will pay your debt to Mr. Cooper; I will give him any compensation for your leaving him abruptly; and I will buy John a commission, if you will but be prevailed upon to withdraw your play, and retire immediately from the stage.”

“Dear, generous girl!” exclaimed Eliza, “can you offer this to me, after the disregard I paid to your advice, and the unjust opinion I entertained of your honour?”

“That is past, and I am willing to forget it,” replied Rachel, “if you will but convince me, by your acquiescence in my present proposal, that you are deserving of its being blotted out from my memory.”

“John is not able to accept your offer,”
replied

replied Miss Oxmondeley. " In the anxiety I felt about the fate of my tragedy, I had forgotten to tell you, that by imprudently bathing before his limb was perfectly strong, he has contracted a weakness in the part, which I fear may never be removed."

" That shall not interrupt my intention of serving you," answered Rachel: " I will endeavour to place you in some situation, where your own abilities must join with my good will and slender means to place you above dependence."

Miss Oxmondeley remained silent.

Rachel went on. " You must yourself point out to me in what way I may serve you, or in what situation I may place you, that is likely to prove most conducive to your happiness, from the state of your present feelings."

" I had formed a plan myself for extricating me from my present situation, and raising me to a higher," answered Eliza with a sigh; " but I fear there is little hope of success from it: though my disposition is romantic, my spirit is proud; and, from these

joint causes, I have wished to rise once more to independence without the aid of my father:—from this inclination, I have resolved to disown him, who casts off me, and I have——but you shall see it, and judge whether I have acted ill or well, and what chance of success attends my project.”—She rose, and, taking from the table a newspaper, put it into the hands of Rachel, directing her with her finger where to read: and Rachel, to her astonishment, beheld the advertisement which she had read with so much surprise in the circulating library in London. “Is it possible,” she cried, “you can have been sufficiently inconsistent, Eliza, to have done this? Wicked I will not say, for I am convinced that your heart is too good to commit what you understand to be a vice; but I perceive that your head is not always sufficiently the friend of your heart; to lead you to investigate your ideas as it becomes you to do, before you convert them into actions:—you cannot know the extent of the crime which you have committed.”

“ My

" My father gave me the example for my conduct," said Miss Oxmondeley. .

" To follow an ill example, is to revenge the conduct of others upon ourselves," replied Rachel.

" Then you do confess my father is in the wrong?" said Eliza.

" I confess," returned Rachel, " that less severity than that which Sir Gilbert has exercised towards you, on the part of parents towards their children, in that great point which comprehends the happiness of their future lives, is reasonable, and commendable; but the conduct of the child should be equally conformable to reason, in not obstinately forcing a connection to which the higher authority of the parent is repugnant.--No conduct of the parent can be an apology for the child's despising him: a parent is the intermediate power between his child and Heaven; Omnipotence hath designed a blessing for him who reveres the author of his being, and denounced punishment against him who neglects him; thus, irreverence for a parent is contempt of God.—Now, let your own heart

answer you, Whether any fault of the parent can be an excuse for the disobedience of the child in so high a point ?”

“ Oh !” cried Eliza, “ how forcible a conviction of my crime have your words brought to my mind ! Indeed, I was ignorant of the extent of my error : I knew I had not acted with a precise regard to duty ; but passion ! blinded my reason, by making my father’s conduct my apology :—you have opened my eyes ; sincerely I thank you, and truly I repent my inconsiderateness :—I will stop the advertisement immediately.”

“ By all means do that,” answered Rachel ; “ let it be taken out, notwithstanding the improbability of any one’s attending to it.”

“ I once thought it so fine, so dashing a scheme !” said Miss Oxmondeley.

“ But it has vanished,” replied Rachel, “ so turn your thoughts to my more sober scheme of happiness for you ; consult with John in the morning ; and when you have determined how I may serve you, depend on my willingness to acquiesce in your plan, provided it exceeds neither the limits of reason, nor my ability.”

"You are too good, too kind!" exclaimed Miss Oxmondeley; "I cannot thank you as I would do, because I fear to insult a heart above being gratified by praise."

Rachel now persuaded Miss Oxmondeley to retire to the bed which she shared with the daughter of the woman of the house; and having promised to rise at whatever hour she should call her in the morning, they parted at the foot of the stairs which led to Eliza's apartment.

CHAP. XXIV.

A fortunate Expedient.

ON leaving Miss Oxmondeley, Rachel immediately returned to the chamber into which Mrs. Hutchinbunck had introduced her son; supposing that their debate, though she did not imagine it was concluded, must have been broken off for that night, as they had been considerably above two hours together.

However, on approaching the room, she soon found that the two parties were still in dispute, and Mrs. Hutchinbunck putting into effect her threat of attempting "to open her son's eyes through his ears."

"You are a foolish low-minded puppy," were the first words Rachel heard her utter; "and if you will persist in this vulgar course of life, your foolishness shall be to your own cost: for you shan't have a farthing of your father's leavings, I can tell you, sir; he had sufficient prudence to put the disposal of all
he

he left into my hands,—and a good thing it was he had the precaution so to do, as you have turned out.”

Rachel could not bear the idea of being thought a listener; and as she was obliged either to remain on the landing, where to be seen must convey the very idea she wished to avoid, or enter the chamber, she without hesitation did the latter.

Richard Hutchinbunck was sitting by the dressing-table, with the countenance of a man who appears anxious to force himself to give attention to a subject which does not interest him. Mrs. Hutchinbunck was sitting up in bed. “Oh!” cried the latter on seeing Rachel, “I am glad you are come, miss; perhaps your tongue will be better able to convince this low-minded boy than mine is, what a disgrace he is bringing upon himself, and me, by herding with a set of vagabonds.”

“I repeat,” said Richard, with all the cool collectedness of a judge pronouncing sentence, “that the mind is not humbled with the condition.”

“In reality it is not,” answered Rachel;

"but in the opinion of the world it is ; and as we are so much oftener judged by appearance than truth, we are in fact consulting ourselves when we consult the world."

"There ! does not miss say as I said to a tittle ?" exclaimed the mother.

"But," returned Richard, "is it not beneath a man of sense to accommodate his actions to the capacity of the multitude ?"

"A man of exalted sense," replied Rachel, "cannot display his talents to greater advantage than by acting so as to acquire the esteem of the world, and still preserve his own."

"But my own esteem is the dearer ; and I must lose my own esteem," exclaimed Richard with all the ardour of romance, "if I know myself ungrateful to the memory of those from whose pens the brightest ideas that ever enlightened the mind of man have fallen !"

"I don't wish to derogate from the merit of what you have marked out to yourself as a virtue," replied Rachel, "when I say that the necessity from which you seem to think
you

you act, does not appear in the strong light to me, in which it does to you; but allowing you to be in the right, and myself consequently mistaken, I am sure I am right in one fact which I shall assert—That whatever we conceive to be a virtue, we are right to perform; but that by a partial performance of it we render it altogether a fault.”

“How!—What do you mean?—How do you apply this assertion to my conduct?—Pray explain,” ejaculated Richard in a tremor of agitation.

“Have you never considered,” resumed Rachel, “how far inferior is the number of authors, whose reputation you have an opportunity of vindicating on the stage, to that of those which can never appear on it; and how many abuses the latter daily suffer from bad readers, and still worse informed minds? Does the reputation of these need no vindication to lesser understandings from the man of knowledge?”

“Your observation,” exclaimed Hutchinbunck, “is a comet bursting from the regions of instruction! I hail it, and receive its salutary

salutary admonition." Then in cooler accents he added, " But tell me, you who comprehend the vastness of this idea, which has bewildered my faculty of thought, how, how am I to attempt its accomplishment?"

" How have others written, to enlighten and improve the world?" asked Rachel: " You have all the powers they possessed, a naturally good understanding cultivated by study, and a desire to excel in what you attempt, backed by a perseverance more than likely to accomplish your end; why then should you hesitate to leave speaking what is already written, for the more noble purpose of writing what is yet perhaps hardly conceived?—I see you adopt my advice."

" I bless the tongue that gave it, and will extol its possessor with my pen: you shall be my muse; I'll hail you for future smiles, and sing your praises for the inspiration you have already given me."

" And will you leave the stage, my dear boy?" exclaimed Mrs. Hutchinbunck.

" Shall I delay to make the less noble idea bend to the more exalted?—Oh, no!" said Richard.

"Then you will leave off acting?—Oh, miss! dear Miss Rachel, thank you again and again, and Heaven bless you as long as you live!" cried Mrs. Hutchinbunck.

"Rachel," said Richard Hutchinbunck, advancing to her whom he addressed, "I have still a doubt, Rachel: I have promised never to leave the company with which I am engaged, whilst Miss Oxmondeley and John Morden remain in it."

"Then let all hesitation on that score vanish, for they will quit it immediately: see Miss Oxmondeley in the morning, and bear her determination," said Rachel.

"Then I am resolved," said Richard: "Farewell to-night, thou great inspirer of exalted sense!"

Rachel returned his salutation, and he was leaving the chamber, so engrossed by his new idea, as to have quite forgotten whom he was about to leave in it besides Rachel; but Mrs. Hutchinbunck could not so calmly part from her reclaimed prodigal, and, springing from the bed, gave him a hug, which she was not deceived in declaring

declaring to be the *strongest* proof of her returning love.

Richard being gone, Mrs. Hutchinbunck began to reiterate her thanks to Rachel for having, as she expressed herself, "so cleverly and so learnedly converted her son from his low-minded ways, which all her arguments and threats had not been able to accomplish."

Rachel, in answer to Mrs. Hutchinbunck, endeavoured to explain to her, that a mind like Richard's, viewing the common objects of life through the false medium of a brain overheated by study, was not to be turned from its purpose by any means but the proposition of a plan which, from the height of its romance, it should conceive more worthy its attention than that already adopted by it; and that, on this account, she had employed the stratagem she had used to wean him from the stage, by inducing him to turn his thoughts to a subject from which, if he did not derive much honour, he could incur no disgrace.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck listened to Rachel's account,

account, more from the consequence it had produced than from the interest which her understanding gave her in the mode of its production : and, happy that the end she had so ardently wished had been effected, she did not puzzle her brain by endeavouring to comprehend the manner of its performance; but, having entered her bed, soon again convinced her companion of her happy state of insensibility, by her loud suspiration.

Rachel quickly after followed her, and slept, no doubt, with equal, if not surpassing, happiness ; for she had that night taken a double draught of composure, to ensure her easy slumber—she had performed two good actions.

CHAP. XXV.

Scylla, adieu !—Welcome, Charybdis !

RICHARD Hutchinbunck retired to his chamber, but not to rest ; he did not even throw himself upon his bed, but passed the night in contemplating the great idea he had just acquired.

Miss Oxmondeley, though in bed, slept no more than her fellow comedian, and at a very early hour rose and went to inform John of occurrences of which he was ignorant. A detail of events was followed by a consultation to determine in what mode Rachel's promised assistance should be accepted.—Determination hung a long time in doubt, till Hutchinbunck coming to relate to them the change in his sentiments, and hear from her own lips the resolution of quitting the stage, which Rachel had informed him that Miss Oxmondeley had taken, assisted them with his advice ; and a plan was at length formed, which they only

only waited Rachel's rising to impart to her.

It may excite surprise, that an intimacy almost amounting to friendship, and perhaps imagined such by the parties, subsisted between Miss Oxmondley and Richard Hutchinbunck, who had before never conversed without disagreement and contempt; and likewise between the opposite dispositions of John Morden and Richard Hutchinbunck: — but similarity of circumstance unites the most opposite in temper and inclination.—It is true, that necessity had reduced Eliza and John to what they now were, and that his own free will was sinking Richard to the same level; but still circumstance was the same to all, and circumstance had produced an union of mind.

When Rachel was risen, Miss Oxmondley went to her, and besought her to bring Mrs. Hutchinbunck to breakfast in her apartment, with which invitation they readily complied; and, on entering it, John Morden, seated in a chair with his leg rested on a stool, was the first object that met Rachel's

chel's sight.—By advancing quickly towards him, she prevented his rising, and taking the hand which she extended towards him, he said: “How do you do, Rachel? how do you do? Well, here we are met again in almost as unexpected situations as when we last saw each other;—but, never mind, life is a board of checkers, and, in moving along, we must pass over the black as well as the white.”

“I am glad to find you in such spirits,” replied Rachel; “I hope they indicate that you are not suffering much pain.”

“Why, as to that,” he returned, “this foolish cold I have caught in my leg gives me a devilish sharp twinge now and then, and I find my spirits so necessary to combat with against it, that I am determined we won't part without a hard pull.”

“Happy disposition!” Rachel could hardly forbear exclaiming, “whose very want of thought is a shield against the sting of those misfortunes, which so many are employing unceasing thought how to blunt.”

When

When they were seated at breakfast, and Rachel had, in some slight measure, gratified the curiosity of her audience in regard to what had befallen her since their separation, and more particularly in explaining to them what had been the occasion of their meeting, John said, "Come, Eliza, tell Rachel what we have been talking about."

Rachel encouraged her to speak, by saying, that she hoped what she was going to say referred to her proposal of the foregoing night; which Miss Oxmondeley answered by replying, that if she did not object to their plan, they meant to return to London and take lodgings there.

"To what end do you purpose going to the capital?" asked Rachel.

"That my labours may immediately be united to your bounty, to acquire us a comfortable existence," answered Eliza.

"What plan have you marked out to yourself to follow?" said Rachel.

"A plan which flatters me with an early prospect of more than independence," replied Eliza; "I shall, directly on my arrival there,

there, offer my play for sale at the theatres; and if the managers are not blind to all stage effect, it must obtain me a handsome sum : it will consequently be played ; and, from the knowledge I myself have acquired of what is requisite to please, it will certainly succeed : this success will get me fame in the world, and ensure me any price I choose to ask for a novel, which I shall, in the mean time, employ myself in writing."

" I cannot either attempt to advise you to pursue this plan, or to desist from it ; for I have no knowledge whatever of the means requisite to be used for bringing a piece upon the London stage : your own opinion, therefore, must be your guide," answered Rachel.

Miss Oxmondeley advanced several arguments, by which she proved to herself, if no one else was convinced by them, that she must be a successful candidate at the altar of Fame, and that she had struck out for herself a certain path to riches and honour.

Rachel now took her apart, for the purpose

pose of inquiring into her debt to Mr. Cooper; and what money she would wish to be supplied with, for her new plan.

Eliza informed her she was twenty-seven pounds indebted to Mr. Cooper; and then requested the loan of an hundred more, which, she said, would be more than enough for the requisite expences of John and herself during the time of Rachel's absence, as she had said that, in all probability, she should not be more than six months gone.

Rachel had ever intended a return of the curate's legacy to his children, and therefore felt happy in refunding a part of what she considered a debt: accordingly she insisted on Miss Oxmondeley's accepting double the sum she had petitioned for. Eliza declared that more than half would be useless to her, but consented to take it, as she had, she said, only to keep it by her, and return it with the sum she had requested to borrow; which she was sure she should, in a very short time, be more than enabled to do,

CHAP. XXVI.

Containing a Simile.

RACHEL was going to return to those whom she had just left to converse in private with Miss Oxmondeley, when the latter stopped her by saying, that there was yet one point remaining in which she must solicit her advice and assistance.

“Speak it freely,” said Rachel, as she perceived Miss Oxmondeley to hesitate.

“You know,” returned Eliza, “that John and myself are not yet married, but our banns have been published in this place under our real names of John Morden and Eliza Oxmondeley, without any one knowing to whom these names apply, as John sent the instructions for publishing them to the clergyman in a blank cover : now, could you not think of some means by which our marriage might be so privately effected, that it should never be known to the world we had lived together single ? for, though the situ-

ation of poor John might defy the tongue of scandal, yet prejudice might speak to my disadvantage, and the illiberal part of the world might give credit to its assertions."

"Your idea is just," answered Rachel; "but the point which distresses you is very easily managed. As you have put the conduct of this affair into my hands, I advise that you summon the clergyman to attend to-morrow morning, at as early an hour as the law of the church permits, to unite the persons whose banns he has been publishing; and that you immediately after the ceremony set out on your way to London; and Mrs. Hutchinbunck and myself will begin on our journey to Harwich at the same time: I can advise no method that will be attended with greater secrecy, as you will have left the place before it is known that your name is not Milsington:—there can be no obstacle to this plan, if John is able to travel in a carriage."

Miss Oxmondeley consented to the proposition, and added, "that the pain in John's leg was now merely rheumatic." And they

were returning to the breakfast apartment, to apprise John of what had passed between them, when they were met by the woman of the house, who, in a half whisper, said to Eliza, "Ma'am, there's a gentleman below in my parlour, who desires me to tell you, that he is come in consequence of the advertisement in the newspaper about a young lady at my house."

"What shall I do?" said Eliza.

"Desire him to be told that you have withdrawn the advertisement," replied Rachel.

Miss Oxmondeley gave a message correspondent with Rachel's advice, and the woman went down to deliver it.

On entering the breakfast-room, they found that Mrs. Hatchinbunck and her son had left it, upon which they began to make John acquainted with their scheme for the following morning ; but scarcely had Rachel opened an explanation of their plan, before the woman of the house returned, saying, "that the gentleman below sent his compliments to the lady, and that even if
she

he had found her parents, he should consider himself honoured by a short conversation with her."

"How strange!" cried Eliza: "Who can he be?"

"I don't know his name, ma'am," returned the woman, "but my daughter says he is a baronet, and came to the Angel last night, in his own coach with four hack horses, and ever so many servants."

"Common civility requires that you should see him," said John, "whoever he is."

"But, perhaps," replied Eliza, "common curiosity only has induced him to request it."

"Suppose I go to him as your friend?" said Rachel: "then, if I find he has any real business with you, you can admit him. If I discover him to be an impertinent intruder, he will not be gratified in knowing from whom the advertisement came."

"If he is the latter," cried John, "you'll not be able to get quit of him without his errand: so e'en let us have him up at once: he can't eat us, if he is a lord."

“Let it be so,” answered Eliza; “I will not allow Rachel to hazard an insult from some affected puppy, by going down on so unusual a business to a stranger.—Pray show the gentleman up,” she continued, turning to the woman of the house, who directly went to follow her orders.

Reader, didst thou ever see some children at a theatre, waiting, with countenances half anxiety and half ecstacy, to behold, for the first time in their lives, the patch-work hero of a pantomime; and when, at length, the long-expected form is in view, having drawn it to their imaginations in a thousand different shapes, and seeing it vary from them all, and not being able to decide whether the sight is pleasing or terrific, they applaud and laugh, but turn aside their faces? Thus, reader, were the passions of our great children, John, Eliza, and Rachel moved, when, after a long expectation of their unknown visitor, the door of their apartment was opened to Sir Gilbert Oxmondeley.

Overpowered by the sight, Miss Oxmondeley, after a momentary gaze, shrieked, fainted,

fainted, and fell to the floor : Rachel ran to her assistance, almost mechanically ; for surprise had, for the instant, taken away her power of thought ; and John Morden, whose inclination always bent more strongly to mirth than its opposite passion, felt an unaccountable propensity to laugh, which his endeavours to suppress converted into sounds not unlike smothered shrieks.

Sir Gilbert stood for about twenty seconds in the door-way, as if every faculty had undergone an instantaneous suspension from some invisible power ; the only motion which, during this time, was perceptible throughout his whole frame, was the gradual closing of his mouth, which astonishment had opened, and the swelling of his cheeks ;—then, action returning with as sudden a spring as it had been stopped, he uttered some words, which his inflated cheeks, as usual with him in passion, rendered inarticulate, gave his body a quicker vibration than he ever had done before his Chinese pavilion, and disappeared.

CHAP. XXVII.

In which a great deal of Business is transacted.

BEFORE those in the apartment which the baronet had just left, or rather refused to enter, were sufficiently recovered, from the various feelings with which his appearance had struck them, to be able to express their astonishment to each other at having seen him, the prompter came running into the room almost breathless from the theatre, to inquire why Mrs. Milington, for by that name was Eliza known in the company, did not come to the last rehearsal of her own play?

Rachel stepped forward to speak for her still fainting friend; and instead of answering to the question of the prompter, she desired him to run back to the theatre, to stop the rehearsal, and tell Mr. Cooper that she begged to see him immediately.

John Morden could not withstand a laugh whenever he was tempted to it; but yet he had feelings to compassionate the distress of
another,

another, particularly that of Eliza, to whom he was become really attached, and had now advanced to give her his own assistance : by his attentions she soon revived, and expressions of astonishment at having seen her father, which neither of her companions could answer, but only join in, flowed from her tongue.

. Not a quarter of an hour had elapsed since Sir Gilbert's departure, before the woman of the house came to the door of the room, which was still open, and, telling Rachel that there was somebody below who wished to speak to her, retired without waiting for an answer.

Rachel did not hesitate to conclude the person below to be Mr. Cooper, and not wishing, just at this time, to expose Miss Oxmondeley to any unnecessary agitation in hearing what must unavoidably be said relative to her, (as it could not be supposed that the manager would accept of any compensation for so great a loss as both actresses and play must prove to him with the very best of tempers,) she rose hastily from her seat, and, saying

“It is Mr. Cooper I dare say, I will go down alone and speak to him,” left the room.

As soon as she came within sight of the stairs, she saw the woman of the house standing upon them, apparently to wait for her coming : as she approached her, the woman said, in an under voice, “Ma’am, it is the old gentleman who was here a few minutes ago, and went away in such a hurry, that wants to see you; he had hardly got to the bottom of the street before he turned about, and came up here again ; I happened to be standing at the door, and he walked right in, and bade me come and tell you, the lady in the habit, he said, that he must speak a few words to you, but charged me not to let any body else know he was here, or who it was that wanted you.”

Rachel hesitated a few moments, whether or not to proceed ; but very little reflection resolved her to see Sir Gilbert : she considered, that though he might conceive her culpable in giving her friendship to his daughter, yet her own heart told her she was not so, for she had not upheld her in disobedience

ence

ence against him, but only assisted her after the step she had taken was become irrevocable : thus she could have nothing to fear from his anger, however he might be prepared to arraign her conduct, since her own heart freed her from blame ; and if it were possible that Sir Gilbert was already half inclined to compassionate and forgive his daughter, or might, through her intercession, be prevailed on so to do, how great a duty should she be omitting, in refusing to consent to an interview which might produce a reconciliation between her father and Eliza ! and thus determined, she desired the woman to show her to the gentleman.

When Rachel entered the apartment which contained the baronet, she found him standing by the window : on hearing her steps, he turned round, and, with a slight inclination of his head, said, in a voice apparently civil-toned, more from constraint than good will towards the person he was addressing, "How do you do, Miss Rachel ? I have taken the liberty of asking to speak a few words to you, and I thank you for coming."

Rachel curtsied, and Sir Gilbert continued: "You must have thought it very odd, I am sure, to see me where you did just now; and lest that undutiful mixx above stairs should think I had the smallest knowledge of her being there, and so came that I might see her, I'll be obliged to you, miss, to tell her, that the thought of seeing her was the thing farthest from my mind; and that, if I had known of her being there, I had rather have gone to the end of the earth than have stood on the same floor with her.—I saw an advertisement in the newspaper, about a girl that wanted to change her parents; and as I thought such a one might be as well pleased with a husband as a new father, I came to offer myself to her, 'if I liked her, seeing you neither would have me yourself, nor recommend me any where else: and after all, I am not sorry I did come, for I have found out that Madam Bet has no farther occasion for me; so I need not trouble myself about her now, if ever I was so inclined before; her new father, when she finds him, may do that, and so, miss, you may tell her; and, more-

over, that I swear by all that is holy and sacred——”

“ Hold, Sir Gilbert !” cried Rachel, “ let me beg of you not to make any solemn asseveration, lest some future time may induce you to repent, when——”

“ My business with you, miss, is over,” interrupted the baronet : “ I’m going to leave this place immediately ; so your servant, good-morning !” and, bursting out of the room, he had left the house before Rachel could invent any means of detaining him.

Before Rachel could determine whether or not it became her to impart the transactions of the foregoing moments to Miss Oxmondeley, a stranger’s voice, in the passage, inquiring for Mrs. Milfington, informed her that Mr. Cooper was arrived ; and finding herself not deceived on asking his name, she introduced herself to him as Mrs. Milfington’s friend, and requested him to return with her to the room from whence she then came.

Confiding to him as much of Miss Oxmondeley’s story as necessity, tempered by
M 6 discretion,

discretion, required of her to reveal, she asked him, what would be judged by him a compensation for her immediately leaving him, and also withdrawing her play.

As the agreement between the manager and Miss Oxmondeley only mentioned a stipulated sum to be paid her weekly, on condition of her not refusing to play any parts in a certain line of acting, but said nothing of the time she was to continue with him, Mr. Cooper had no articles to show as his right of detaining her, and, consequently, could only describe to Rachel the very great loss he should sustain by so suddenly losing the main prop of his company, as he was pleased to style Eliza, without any previous notice, to enable him to engage another performer in her line.

Rachel continued, however, only to beg of him to name the sum for which the immediate assistance of such a performer might be obtained; and at length, after much debate, Mr. Cooper consented to accept thirty guineas, for which, he said, he thought it possible he might obtain an actress of inferior abilities from London, as the theatres there were
just

just breaking up, to take the business till he could engage one for a permanency.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck, having desired the woman of the house to inform her when the manager called on Miss Ellis, now came in, and requested to know what equivalent he would accept for the immediate dismissal of her son.

Mr. Cooper answered, that as the gentleman had never taken any salary, nor performed any regular cast of parts, but only occasionally played characters given up to him by the actors, he was at liberty to withdraw himself when he pleased.

Had Mr. Cooper not been too polite to speak his real feelings, he would have said, that both the manager and his company are always glad to be disencumbered of a gentleman performer ; for, if he is unacquainted with the stage, and requires a good many rehearsals to perfect him in his part, he consequently takes up a good deal of their time, which is a great offence to their dignity : and if he happens to understand what he is about, and carry off the applause, then he commits an unpardonable crime !

CHAP. XXVIII.

Wherein "the Deed is done."

MISS Oxmondeley's debt, and the price of her liberty, being paid by Rachel to Mr. Cooper before he left the house, hand-bills were in a few hours circulated through the town, giving information "that Mrs. Milington having left the place the foregoing evening, without any previous notice of her departure to the manager, and taken with her the manuscript of her play that had been announced for that evening, a new opera would be given instead of it."

It became Rachel's next business to bribe the family where Eliza lodged into not contradicting the import of these hand-bills, which they faithfully promised they would not do.

The scheme for the marriage of John and Eliza on the following morning having been imparted to the former, he embraced it with rapture, and, at a late hour in the evening, the clergyman was requested to attend at church on the next morning at eight o'clock.

Eliza

Eliza learnt by accident, from the daughter of her landlady, that her father had had an audience of Rachel : thus its subject could no longer be kept a secret from her ; and, on hearing it, she happily consoled herself with thinking, that though she seemed more irretrievably than ever to have lost his favour, yet she was now on the point of entering a path where she should less than ever have occasion to require or regret it.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck had, throughout the day, been endeavouring to prevail on her son to accompany her on her visit of business to Holland. She wanted her friends there to see what a fine tall man he was grown ; and she wanted him to see Holland, now he was old enough to remember its wonderful beauties after he came back again to England. But no entreaties could obtain for her her ardent wish ; and at length, after much breath wasted on her part to little purpose, she consented to suffer him to accompany John Morden and Eliza to London, where he intended to take lodgings
in

in their neighbourhood, and, like Miss Oxmondeley, begin the glorious trade of author.

The doting mother supplied him liberally with money, and begged of him, if he should write any thing pretty, and have it printed before she left Holland, to send her over a few copies, that she might give them to her friends, to show what a clever man he was.

The evening passed off cheerfully to all parties. Rachel felt really happy in enjoying the society of those friends from whom she had been some time separated, and whose future comfort she now trusted she had been the means of founding; Eliza was in transports, from her anticipation of future fame and riches; John was pretending to learn his lesson, as he called it, for the following morning; and Mrs. Hutchinbunck was alternately delighted by the idea of her visit to poor dear Holland, and her son's becoming a sufficiently great author to gain himself a tomb in Westminster-abbey.

Richard Hutchinbunck alone was silent, but not less happy in contemplating a great idea he had conceived, and which it will
be

be afterwards shown how he gave to the world.

Rather before the time in the morning for the rites of Hymen to commence, our quintette entered the church, and the priest, who, like many others of his function, was a great payer of homage at the shrines of Thalia and Melpomene, recognized, to his surprise, Mrs. Milfington in her who now stood before him in order to become Mrs. Morden. Yet, as her avowed husband Mr. Milfington was the party to whom she came to be joined, he thought himself wise in concluding, that he was about to sew up tight a piece of work which had been basted by his Gretna-green competitor, and accordingly proceeded in his duty; which being concluded, Mr. and Mrs. Morden, with Richard Hutchinbunck, in one chaise, were a mile advanced on their journey towards London, and Mrs. Hutchinbunck and Rachel, in another, almost an equal distance on their way to Harwich, before our priest of Hymen had unburdened himself of his surplice, and entered the first house where he meant to relate this wonderful piece of news!

CHAP. XXIX.

An Introduction.

AND now leaving, for a while, the party who are proceeding towards the metropolis, we will journey forward with Rachel and Mrs. Hutchinbunck; who, on their arrival at Harwich, were informed that the packet was to sail for Holland on the following afternoon.

At breakfast the next morning, the waiter apologized to them for the inn being so full of company, that his master was under the necessity of requesting that they would permit a gentleman, who was to be their fellow passenger on board the ship, to breakfast in the same room with them.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck directly replied, "that she could have no objection to a gentleman's company, who was really a gentleman;" and Rachel, who, unlike many modern misses, did not pretend to delicate fears at the introduction of a strange man, because she had never been in the habit of entertaining hopes
of

of an enlarged acquaintance with every man she saw, desired he might be shown into the room.

In a few minutes the door opened, and the gentleman in question entered to Rachel, who was then alone, for Mrs. Hutchinson had left the room to make some alteration in her dress, on the above arrangement taking place. He was in deep mourning, and appeared to be about twenty-five years of age; his countenance was rather intelligent than handsome; his easy manners bespoke the gentleman, as did his dress, which was not so fashionable as to be extravagant, nor so unfashionable as to be particular. It was that happy mean in dress, which so few know how to acquire, and so many lose by their endeavours to obtain with exactness.

On entering the apartment, he bowed to Rachel; she curtsied to him in return; and perceiving that he hesitated to converse, as uncertain whether she would deem it a warrantable liberty, she inquired of him, "Whether the wind was fair for their intended voyage?" and he had scarcely answered her,
 "that

“that it was,” in a tone and manner which showed that he considered himself flattered by her notice, when Mrs. Hutchinbunck came in. The stranger turned towards her on her entrance, and she, regarding only his figure, and perceiving him to be what she called a ‘genteel man,’ was plaiting herself into form for a ‘genteel curtsy,’ which he prevented her from making, by the question of “How do you do, Mrs. Hutchinbunck?—I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you very well, ma’am?”

The lady named looked full in his face, and, after a momentary stare, “Lord deliver me!” she exclaimed: “Well, if I knew you, Mr. Hamilton! I beg your pardon, sir, for my forgetfulness; and yet I am sure I had not forgot you, neither; I suppose, it was either my not expecting to see you here, or your being in black, that made me not know you just at first: well, sir, and pray how do you do? and how does all your good family?”

“My father, ma’am, is no more,” returned the young man.

“Good heavens! indeed!” cried Mrs.

Hutchinbunck: " Poor man ! who would have thought, to have seen him, hale and strong as he was this time twelve months, that he would have been in his coffin now !—Death is a strange thing, Mr. Hamilton ; there is no accounting when it comes, or why it comes : " she wiped her eyes, and added, " I suppose you have heard that my dear husband is dead at last ? "

Mr. Hamilton replied, that he had seen it in the public prints.

" Only to think of it ! " rejoined Mrs. Hutchinbunck : " What a long time my husband lived, and lingered, and lived, when every body, for years, thought that every next day must be his last ; and your father, that nobody thought of any thing but his living these twenty or thirty years to come, died at a minute's warning, as I may say !—Mercy on me, the uncertainty of this world !—Well, there is nothing like being prepared for whatever may happen, as I said years before my poor husband died.—Nothing will happen but what pleases God, and he knows what is best.—Come, Mr. Hamilton, sit down, and break-

breakfast with us, fir, we have not begun yet : this lady and I, Miss Ellis, fir, drink green tea ; but if you choose black, we can easily have another pot."

Mr. Hamilton bowed, and seated himself at the table, but without any other reply than a sigh, which he struggled to smother ; and on again meeting Mrs. Hutchinbunck's eyes, which were still placed full on his, and plainly indicated that the tea was all she now remembered of the conversation just past, he answered, " Your tea, ma'am, if you please ;" and with a nod of her head, which bespoke that she mistook his indifference for politeness, she sat down to make it.

During their meal, Rachel learnt that Mr. Hamilton's family, consisting of his father, his mother, three sisters, and himself, had been for nearly a year at the Hot-Wells, on account of the indisposition of one of the young ladies, who had died there during the time Mrs. Hutchinbunck had lived there with her husband for the benefit of his health ; and from their inhabiting contiguous houses, and frequently meeting at the

the rooms, a watering-place acquaintance had been formed between them.

The deceased Mr. Hamilton had risen to the so-named title of a nabob, from low circumstances, and was supposed to have brought over property to a considerable amount ; Mrs. Hutchinbunck called herself a sort of a nabob, and declared herself very rich, for which qualities Mr. Hamilton was prepared to respect any body, and thus with them lay the particular intimacy subsisting between the families.

Mr. William Hamilton, for such was the name of the gentleman just introduced to Rachel, continued, by the politeness of his manners, which were pleasing without affectation, to strengthen her in the opinion she had conceived on first seeing him, of his acquaintance with the more refined walks of society ; he evidently strove to render himself agreeable, by the share he took in any conversation that was started, and it was as evident that he had the information-requisite to render him so ; but it was apparent, to both Mrs. Hutchinbunck and Rachel,
that

that there was a cloud hanging over his spirits, which damped his abilities, and defied his endeavours to disperse it.

When he, after breakfast, was a few minutes absent from the room, he naturally became the subject of discourse to those left in it.—Mrs. Hutchinbunck “could not think,” she said, “what had so strangely altered him ; he used to be the merriest, pleasantest gentleman she had almost ever known ; to be sure, it must be his father’s death ; and then, what could he be going to Holland for ?—It looked so rude,” she thought, “to ask him in right down terms, but she would try and sift it out, if she could, for she had a strange curiosity to know.”

So had Rachel, though she forbore to declare it ; for, little as she had yet seen of Mr. Hamilton, she could not but imagine that she saw more of mystery than melancholy hanging over his countenance.

CHAP. XXX.

Like many other Riddles, easy when discovered.

WHEN Mr. Hamilton returned to the apartment, which he did in a short time after having left it, to the surprise of them it contained, he rather burst than walked into it; and shutting the door in the most apparent agitation, locked it, and then remained by it in the attitude of listening to what was passing on the other side.

“ Good gracious, sir!—what’s the matter ?” cried Mrs. Hutchinbunck.

Mr. Hamilton did not appear to hear her; at least he did not answer her.

With a look of astonishment, cast at Rachel, she repeated her inquiry.

In a few seconds he unlocked the door, and, advancing towards Rachel, said, “ I beg your pardon, ladies, if I have alarmed you, but there was a troublesome fellow in the passage, whom I thought it best to keep out

of this room."—He bowed as he finished his sentence; and Mrs. Hutchinbunck concluding that what he had done had been for their protection, asked, "If it was a man in liquor?"

"I did not see him," was the answer; and silence prevailed for some time, till Mrs. Hutchinbunck proposed a little walk about the town, by way of exercise, before they were shut up in the ship, and added, "Come, sir, will you go with us?"

Mr. Hamilton excused himself by saying he had a letter to write, which he would take the opportunity of doing in their absence.

During their walk, the ladies, as might be expected, conversed on the occurrences of the morning, but without being able to draw from their revival any conclusion.

Returning to an early dinner, they found Mr. Hamilton traversing the room with hasty steps, and supporting his forehead upon the palm of his hand; on their entrance, he seemed to start from a reverie, and took a seat in a corner of the apartment farthest removed from the window.

Dinner being ended, and a basket of provisions

vifions packed up, as the joint flock of the ladies and Mr. Hamilton, for the voyage; a large hamper, nearly full of straw, which Mrs. Hutchinbunck had desired to be procured for her, was brought in by the waiter; and in this, as the last piece of packing preparatory to their embarking, was to be enclosed her favourite spaniel, which may be remembered to have travelled in the mail-coach from London towards Hilden, to the no great convenience either of the animal, his mistress, or her fellow-passengers.

With some reluctance on his part, the dog was corded up in his basket, by the joint efforts of Mrs. Hutchinbunck and the waiter; and just as the operation was concluded, the captain's boat was announced to be come to shore to take the company to the packet, and a couple of watermen came in to fetch away the luggage.

"How far does the boat lie distant from this house?" asked Mr. Hamilton.

"Not much wide of half a cable's length, your honour," returned one of the watermen, who was, meanwhile, taking up a box-coat
N 2 belonging

belonging to Mr. Hamilton from the table, and preparing to swing it over his arm.

“ No, stop,” cried Mr. Hamilton, “ give me the coat, I’ll carry that myself ;” and, taking it from the waterman, he ran his arms into the sleeves, and, pulling up the cape, buttoned it tight round his neck.— “ Now take up that trunk,” he continued, “ and I’ll follow you.”

The men obeyed his orders.

Two additional porters had, during this time, entered the room, and Mrs. Hutchinbunck was beginning to address one of them, in a long exhortation, to be careful in carrying her dog to the boat, when Mr. Hamilton, stepping in between them, said, “ I’ll take care of your spaniel, ma’am ;” and, without waiting her answer, lifted the hamper upon his shoulder, and followed the men who had gone out before with his trunk.

Mrs. Hutchinbunck declared the gentleman’s behaviour was very polite ; and Rachel contented herself with thinking it very strange.

On approaching the boat, they saw Mr. Hamilton busied in assisting the watermen to
take

take in the luggage ; which when they had completed, he, so contrary to his former politeness, sprang into it himself, and sat down with his back to the land.

An elderly gentleman and his wife, and two other gentlemen, were in the boat with them ; and these, Rachel learnt, were all the passengers going on board, in addition to Mr. Hamilton, her friend Mrs. Hutchinbunck, and herself, except some persons of inferior rank, who had taken a passage in the steerage, and had been conveyed on board in another boat.

When the boat arrived alongside of the packet, Mr. Hamilton was the first to gain the deck ; and throwing off his great coat, Rachel had scarcely heard him exclaim, “ Thank God ! ” before his hand was extended to assist her in climbing up into the ship.

Immediately on coming on board, Mrs. Hutchinbunck called for the steward to show her a bed, as it was customary with her, she said, on ship-board, to lie down with most of her clothes on, as soon as she entered the vessel,

vessel, as she imagined it was a slender preventative against sea-sickness; and one of the gentlemen, being as great a sufferer from the same cause as herself, adopted her plan.

The elderly gentleman and his wife agreed in being pretty well, provided they did not look at the sea; and, accordingly, placed themselves in the cabin, with their backs to the stern: the other remaining gentleman asserted, that the sea was the element which always best agreed with him, and, after having chosen his bed, he returned to the deck: Mr. Hamilton and Rachel declared themselves equally ignorant of the effect of sailing; Mr. Hamilton, however, said, he thought he should prefer the deck, on account of the air; and Rachel, half from concordance in his opinion, and half from a wish to be where he was, that she might farther observe a character which had already, on so short an acquaintance, appeared to her so replete with incongruities, gave her consent to the proposal, and they together went upon deck.

They seated themselves on the quarter-deck,

deck, and Mr. Hamilton engaged her attention to a varied conversation, which raised him higher in her thoughts, than she could have supposed it possible for a man so utterly a stranger, in so short a time, to have done, however refined his sense, and however pleasing his mode of imparting it.

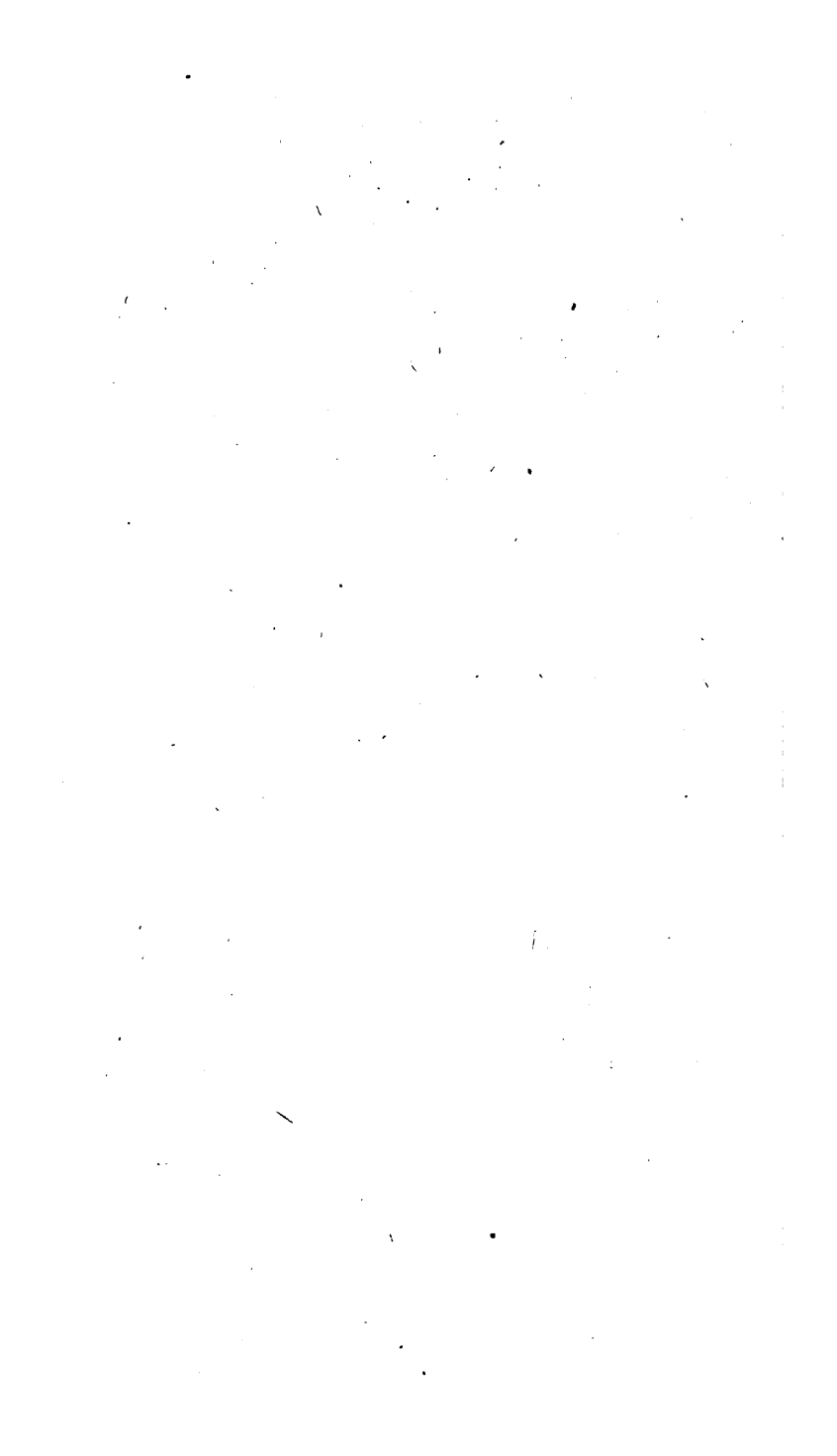
They rose not from their station till summoned to tea; and Rachel, then casting her eyes around, beheld England, now barely visible, dying away from her sight, behind a curtain of clouds, which seemed rapidly descending towards the margin of the sea: she felt that, though she had resolution to leave the kingdom, she had not fortitude to view the departing land without emotion: her mind did not, at that instant, present to her the cause of the sensation she was then experiencing; and fearing to inquire it of her heart, lest the definition should prove unfavourable to her peace, she snatched a last glance, and hurried down into the cabin.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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